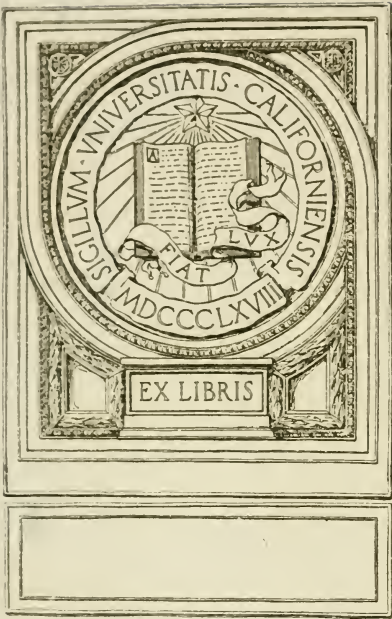


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LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S  
SPEECHES

VOL. II.

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SPEECHES  
OF  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, M.P.

1880—1888

COLLECTED, WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY

LOUIS J. JENNINGS, M.P.

EDITOR OF 'THE CROKER PAPERS' ETC.

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SPEECHES  
OF  
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

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THE PROPOSED ABANDONMENT OF ULSTER.

BELFAST, FEBRUARY 23, 1886.

[Lord Randolph Churchill was the first of the leaders of the 'Unionist Party'—the name, as a subsequent speech will show, which he himself gave to the opponents of Mr. Gladstone's Repeal schemes—who visited Ulster. Many things were said in this speech which did not give unalloyed satisfaction to either party, chiefly because they happened to be true.]

I HAVE accepted the invitation of a gentleman who enjoys your confidence to come over to Belfast to confer with you at a crisis big with fate to you and yours ; and I am more anxious to ascertain how you propose to face and deal with the crisis, than to endeavour to dictate to you any special political action. There can be no doubt that the policy towards Ireland denoted by Mr. Gladstone's accession to office, by the Hawarden Manifesto, by the nomination of Mr. John Morley to the most responsible post in the Irish Government, by the refusal of Lord Hartington to join Mr. Gladstone's Government—there can be no doubt that the policy indicated by all these facts is one which involves, more or less, and probably more than less, the Repeal of the legislative Union. The Tory party in England are determined to offer to any such policy, or

anything in the nature of such a policy, the most determined resistance; and no doubt in that resistance we shall have the sympathy of many persons of position in the Liberal ranks. But, my lords and gentlemen, it is essential for us to know to what extent—do not be vexed with me for saying this—we can count on support of this resolution from Ireland. I have only come here as an Englishman to place before you as best I can what public opinion is in England; and, therefore, be not impatient with me when I say that a good deal of uncertainty on this point exists in England; and I think it is not unnatural that there should be a good deal of ignorance in the public mind of England as to the powers of resistance to the policy of Repeal which the Loyalists of Ireland might offer, because we have fancied for some years that the power of the Loyalists in Ireland would seem to have been on the wane. Let us calmly examine into recent history. We shall find things a little changed since the days of 1848, when the Government in Dublin, knowing who its best friends were, and being alarmed for the safety of Ireland, served out arms to the Loyalists of the North. Things are changed since those days, and the change took place with Mr. Gladstone's accession to office in 1869. All Mr. Gladstone's policy has been directed, from that time to the present day, to the strengthening of the party of Repeal and to the weakening of the party of the Union in Ireland. In 1869 Mr. Gladstone made his first attack on what he called the upas-tree of Loyalist ascendancy by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland; and whatever else may be urged in support of that policy, there can be no doubt that in the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland one of the chief bulwarks of the Union was sacrificed. No doubt there was a sharp fight over the Act of Disestablishment, but the result was acquiesced in by the Loyalists of Ireland with unexpected resignation. The next step of Mr. Gladstone's policy was to break the power of the Irish landlords. The Irish landlords are the natural leaders of the Loyalists in Ireland. But by Mr. Gladstone's policy the power of the Irish landlords was greatly broken. Another link in the same chain was the policy of giving over the practical administration of criminal justice into the hands



of the peasantry of the three provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, under the Act which was called Lord O'Hagan's Juries Act. That Act put the administration of justice into the hands of a class who are under the control and direction of the leaders of sedition, and has been the most serious cause of the impunity of crime in recent years. After this there was a desire on Mr. Gladstone's part to destroy the University of Dublin, one of the most renowned seats of learning in the world. Mr. Gladstone contemplated the destruction of that University, and its conversion into a Roman Catholic seminary. But in this effort he failed; his power collapsed for six years, till in 1880 Mr. Gladstone contrived again to become the head of the Government, and again he showed his policy in Ireland to be to strengthen the hands of the party of Repeal.

I ask your attention to this review of Mr. Gladstone's policy. You know that his policy since 1880 has been a policy of concession to the party of Mr. Parnell—a policy framed to weaken the power of the Loyalists and to strengthen that of the disloyal party. Some of his measures, I am prepared to admit, were plausible enough; but take his policy as a whole, and you will find that it has been directed to the weakening of the party of the Union, to the increasing of the party of disloyalty. This most insidious process has been spread over a long period, and has, no doubt, produced the effect which it was intended it should produce upon the Loyalists of Ireland and upon the public mind in England, and has been the cause of corresponding encouragement and triumph to the party of Repeal. For the last twelve years England has heard of nothing else but the Nationalists or Separatists in Ireland. The attention of Parliament has been concentrated upon their action, and the time of Parliament has been monopolised by their proceedings. In the struggle which has been going on the Loyalists have lost much of their Parliamentary influence. All the corporations, the municipal bodies, and the local boards of guardians out of Ulster have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and in these bodies the Loyalists have scarcely any longer any representation. All that shows a very serious diminution of strength. No doubt it is very unpleasant for us to record it, but you will agree

that, at a moment like the present, when we are called upon to face a fresh crisis, it is wise on our part to look into the history of recent years, to examine our position, to take stock of it, to count up our gains and losses; and I fear that you will find, in looking over recent years, that you Loyalists have very few gains.

I cannot conceal from you—it would be wrong if I concealed from you—my opinion as to the dangerous and deadly nature of the combination which is now arrayed against the interests which you hold dear—the combination of Mr. Gladstone with his personal following, supported by the Radical party, and supported by the party which follows Mr. Parnell. I believe—and I say it with some amount of shame as an Englishman—that the success of the resistance to this policy meditated by this combination primarily rests with you. The vast bulk of our modern English electoral body has begotten apathy and unconcern. The glamour of Mr. Gladstone's prestige and the spell of Mr. Gladstone's oratory are still powerful in England over the minds of men, and it is only by demonstrations the most imposing, by energy the most striking, and by action the most emphatic that you can rivet the attention of the democracy of England on any particular part of public affairs, or that you can enable them to entertain doubts in their minds as to the personal infallibility of Mr. Gladstone, who has been for so long a time with a great portion of them their most venerated and adored idol. You are, gentlemen, I believe, in this great crisis the first line of defence, the second line of defence, and the last line of defence. With you it primarily rests whether Ireland shall remain an integral portion of this great empire, sharing in all its glory, partaking of all its strength, benefiting by all its wealth, and helping to maintain its burdens; or whether, on the other hand, Ireland shall become a focus and a centre of foreign intrigue and deadly conspiracy directed against a dominion with which is indissolubly connected the happiness not only of the Western but also of the Eastern world. Upon you, gentlemen, lies this most tremendous responsibility; to you the issue means everything. It means honour, religion, liberty, and, I should say, when I think of the days of 1641, it means

possibly life itself. To me, as an Englishman, the issue of this struggle seems without doubt to involve the fate of the British Empire. If we cannot hold Ireland, obviously we cannot hold India. We cannot hold our supremacy over our colonies if we cannot govern this country. Commerce is founded on dominion, and British commerce and British dominion must stand or fall together. Our commercial prosperity and supremacy depend upon our holding India and upon our union with the colonies. Therefore I say—and I hope I shall not be supposed to be guilty of exaggeration—that upon the issues of this contest the fate of the empire rests; and yet the duty of suppressing this movement for the Repeal of the Legislative Union seems to depend mainly upon you. In 1844 one of the greatest ornaments that the Liberal party ever possessed was Lord Macaulay; and what did he say about the value of the connection between England and Ireland and the value of that Union? He said, 'Britain can do many things which are beyond the power of many other nations in the world: she has dictated peace to China; she rules Africa and Australia; she can sweep from the seas all commerce but her own; she can blockade every port from the Baltic to the Adriatic; she is able to guard her vast Indian dominions from all hostilities either by land or sea: but in this gigantic body there is one vulnerable spot. At that spot in '98 a blow was aimed which narrowly missed, but which, if it had not missed, must have been a deadly blow.' Those were the words of Lord Macaulay in 1844; they apply to the present moment. The question I have to ask you, gentlemen, is this: Are you the same men as your forefathers were in '98? Because now, in this nineteenth century—in this age of progress and civilisation—another deadly blow is aimed at the vulnerable spot. It is not the same as in '98. It is a blow aimed by different men. It is by a weapon forged in a different furnace. It is not a blow aimed by armed men rising in rebellion, and spreading murder and massacre and terror on every side. It is a blow, I am sorry to say, aimed by a Minister of the Crown, and which is smothered by all the glittering tinsel, by the artificial trappings, of constitutional and of Parliamentary action; but a blow, nevertheless, far more dangerous, far more difficult to

deal with, even than the one your forefathers had to meet in '98.

It may be useful to inquire why this danger has so suddenly come upon you in Ireland. Six months ago, I venture to say, there was hardly a single practical politician who imagined that, by any possibility, the question of Repeal could come within the range of practical politics. Why has it come so suddenly upon you? Is it because the circumstances of Ireland are in any way changed? If the circumstances of Ireland have changed, it has been in such a manner as to make it all the more necessary to defend the Union. Irish grievances have been removed one after another; and I do not believe that, at the present moment, Ireland can point to a real grievance peculiar to herself which is not shared in also by England and Scotland, or to one which is of so desperate and intolerable a nature that the people should clamour for the Repeal of the Union. No: the cause of this movement is much more remote and much more indirect. The cause is—the attitude taken at the last election by the new electoral body in the English counties. If the new element introduced into the electorate by the last Reform Bill had not been seduced from the paths of common-sense and reason by the worthless bribes of Radical agitators, the Tory party would have been so strong in this Parliament that your honour, and liberty, and all that you hold dear, would have been safe at least for a generation. The great English towns went for the Tories, but the counties fell away; and consequently your liberty, your religion, all that you value, are in danger; the Loyalists are to be sacrificed, and the Union is to be dissolved. Why? For this reason, and for no other—because the agricultural labourer of England has persuaded himself that the only road to happiness is the possession of three acres and a cow, and that the only men to help him well along that road are Mr. Gladstone and the Radical party. Of course that is not the reason which Mr. Gladstone would acknowledge. He would put forward much higher and loftier reasons than that which is the real reason. One of the reasons which Mr. Gladstone and Mr. John Morley put forward is this—they say that the cause of Repeal of the Union is the cause of five-sixths of the Parliamentary representa-

tives of Ireland. Well, I do not believe that a more insincere reason was ever assigned for any legislative project before. When the franchise was extended it was known that the party of Mr. Parnell would be numerically increased. It was openly acknowledged by everybody; but it never entered into the imagination of any member of Parliament that the consequence of the extension of the franchise to Ireland was to be the Repeal of the Union between the two countries. The extension of the franchise was not for the benefit of Ireland only, but for the whole of the United Kingdom. But the franchise was extended under the belief that it would tend to the progress of the United Kingdom as a whole, of the empire generally. We never intended in Parliament that the franchise should be extended in order that the Irish people might obtain a Parliament in Dublin, or that the franchise should be extended for the purpose of dismembering the united empire. Do not think, gentlemen, that I regret the extension of the franchise in Ireland. I do not regret it. I supported it in the House of Commons, for I thought that the Legislative Union would be cemented thereby. Whether right or wrong in that action, I deny the right of Mr. Parnell with eighty followers, as I denied the right of Mr. Parnell with forty followers, to use the extension of the franchise for the purpose of destroying the British Empire, or for the purpose of ruining and scattering, or driving into exile a million or more of persons who, for two hundred years, have adhered to the British Empire. My lords and gentlemen, I told you that there was no doubt whatever that a Minister at the present time is meditating a deadly blow at the Union. Who is helping him? Who is at the back of that Minister in this destructive policy? He has, no doubt, with him the Radical party in England; but I do not think the Radical party in England, or even the Radical party in Scotland, of much consequence. If he had only such help, I do not think, gentlemen, he would progress very far. But he has behind him a force far more formidable: he has the party and the organisation of Mr. Parnell. Mr. Parnell aspires to obtain the government of Ireland for his party; and on what title do they base their claim? Do they base it on a long sequence of

acts of heroism, endurance, or sacrifice? Do they base it on hard-fought actions in the field? It was thus that the Italians won their liberty; it was thus that the Greeks won theirs; it was thus that the Bulgarians gained theirs; it was thus that the hardy mountaineers of Montenegro won their independence. Mr. Parnell's claim is founded on widely different grounds; it is based on Parliamentary action of a very peculiar and discreditable nature. Are the Irish people who are under his control bound to him by love? Is it not rather by terror? Is there anything in the way in which Mr. Parnell deals with the Irish people which would appeal to the higher aspirations of a community? The forces which Mr. Parnell elicits and directs emanate from the basest prejudices of class and sect—they are forces which are kept together by means of appeals to covetousness and greed, and by promises held out to them of the acquisition of property by plunder, violence, and fraud. Is it not a matter of common knowledge that the forces which Mr. Parnell controls are brought into action by the most extraordinary system of organised intimidation which history can record, which makes the lives of those who have to submit to it almost intolerable? Such are the forces which Mr. Parnell directly controls. There are other forces, which I do not say Mr. Parnell controls, and for the exercise of which I do not assert he is personally responsible. Those forces are bred by foreign agencies and nourished by foreign gold, forces which act by murder, by assassination, and by dynamite, forces which terrorise the peasantry by moonlight marauding and midnight massacre; forces which do not confine their outrages to men, but, in order to injure and terrify men, mutilate and torture, with every circumstance of ingenious atrocity, harmless and unoffending dumb animals. It is by forces such as these that the boasted five-sixths of the Irish people have been coerced into putting forward this demand for Repeal. Does that entitle them to national independence? Was there ever in the history of the world any record of a permanent structure of liberty built upon foundations so terrible and so foul?

Let me draw your attention to another point. Mr. Parnell and his party claim to govern Ireland through their own Parlia-

ment. What capacity have these persons shown for the wise and humane government of a people? Have they shown any burning desire for civil and religious liberty? But let us go more into detail. What is the great want, would you say, of Ireland at the present moment? Somebody in the audience said 'peace,' and I agree with him. But, next to that, and leaving out the North of Ireland, and taking the other three provinces, I will say that the great want of Ireland at the present moment is capital and credit, and in addition to these the diffusion among the people of a liberal learning. How does Mr. Parnell attract capital into Ireland? You saw a singular example of his efforts in that direction the other day. For some reason or other a very prosperous and powerful and wealthy company, an Irish Steam Packet Company, displeased Mr. Parnell's organisation the National League; and the moment that took place, on a pretext which was perfectly flimsy and frivolous, Mr. Parnell and the National League set themselves to work the ruin of that Irish company. Well, that is a clever way of attracting capital into Ireland. But how did Mr. Parnell go to work for the purpose of confirming Irish credit? He again set to work in a most peculiar way. During the last six months there have been two deliberate and sustained attempts on the part of the National League to break the Bank of Ireland—that is how they seek to confirm credit. In December I happened to be in Dublin when the 'Freeman's Journal' wrote a series of articles which had the effect of bringing down the Bank of Ireland stock 40 or 50 points in the market. And I believe that the 'Freeman's Journal' would have persisted in that course but that, as I was told on the highest authority, the 'Freeman's Journal' got a most significant intimation from persons in high position in the Roman Catholic Church that a very large amount of Roman Catholic charitable funds were invested in Bank of Ireland stock, and that the movement which was undoubtedly set on foot by the 'Freeman's Journal' was calculated greatly to cripple, and possibly altogether to destroy, those charitable funds. However, that is a very useful instance of the capacity of Mr. Parnell and his party for the purposes of government. They have almost

ruined one of the most prosperous commercial companies in Ireland, and for the past six months they have done their best to break one of the greatest financial establishments in the country. How does Mr. Parnell endeavour to diffuse liberal learning among the people of Ireland? Why, you saw the other day from a speech of Archbishop Walsh—and he is one of Mr. Parnell's closest allies—that nothing would satisfy him until Trinity College was utterly destroyed, or at any rate changed beyond all recognition. Trinity College is perhaps as bright a centre of liberal learning as the world can show. That institution was to be swept away—the last trace, as he called it, of Protestant ascendancy. I think you will find that, whether you try this party of Mr. Parnell by title or capacity, you will come to the conclusion that they have lamentably failed in making out their case. Mr. Gladstone contemplates the establishment of an Irish Parliament in Dublin, and not only an Irish Parliament, but an Irish Ministry. Who, do you think, would compose that Irish Ministry? I do not imagine that Mr. Parnell would have the composition of that Ministry entirely in his own hands. Greater powers than his would compose it, and I should have very little doubt that in that Ministry, after a short time, the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer would be Mr. Patrick Egan. The Home Secretary would probably be Mr. Sheridan of Tubbercurry; and other persons such as Messrs. Frank Byrne, Patrick Ford, or O'Donovan Rossa would hold high places in the Administration. Because, depend upon it, the first act of an Irish Parliament in Dublin must be to pass a general act of political amnesty, under which all these worthies whom I have named to you would immediately return, and would glorify and adorn by their presence the streets of Dublin and of Cork, and would be able by the record of their patriotic services, and by the fact of their having been compelled, owing to the intrusive attentions of the police, to pass a lingering exile in a foreign land, to make out an irresistible claim to the holding high office in an Irish Ministry. But am I to be told, at this time of day, that we are to call upon the Loyalists of Ireland—upon the citizens of this great and wealthy city—to submit themselves to the power of, and to obey laws which are framed and promul-



gated by, miscreants such as these? But that is the logical meaning, that is the inevitable result, of a Parliament in College Green. That is the real result of Mr. Gladstone's policy, and the forces which I have described to you are the forces with which Mr. Gladstone is going to work. I do not think I was wrong when I said that it was a monstrous and a formidable combination which now menaces your interests—one which might well strike terror into the stoutest heart; and it is not at all out of place that we should inquire to-night, with all seriousness and earnestness, what resources we can count upon to meet this danger.

Now, I would not say anything, and I would not for the world ask you to say anything, against the Roman Catholics of Ireland. To meet and overcome this formidable combination which is rampant against us, I would like to appeal to all the Loyalists of Ireland, to all loyal subjects of the Queen, no matter to what class or creed they may belong. Heaven forbid that I should say anything that would reflect upon the Catholics or indispose them towards our cause! I know, my lords and gentlemen, that there are hundreds and thousands of Roman Catholics in England and in Ireland whose sympathies are for the Unionist party—who hope and long for the success of the Loyalists in Ireland. But at the present crisis I have a right to appeal to the loyal Roman Catholics of Ireland to come forward and declare themselves openly, to show publicly and unmistakably which side they are on. I believe they regret to see the chiefs of their Church allying themselves with the party which has diffused and maintained doctrines at variance with the tenets of the Catholic Church, and that they must seriously condemn the connection between Catholic clergymen and the branches of the National League. Many of the priests who take an active part in this agitation can hardly be ignorant of the complicity of some of the local branches of the League with some of the most frightful forms of crime and outrage. The loyal Catholics see this formidable organisation receiving additional strength from the consecration almost that it seems to receive from the Church of Rome in Ireland. They see half of Mr. Parnell's power is derived from the support of the hierarchy of Ireland. They see

all this and they deplore it; they mourn over it. No one here can doubt the sincerity of their feelings in this matter; but I say that in these times no practical politician can be content with mere negative support or action. He that is not with us is against us; and I have a right to call on those loyal Catholics whose existence we know of, whose motives we appreciate, and whose assistance we would gladly welcome—to stand forth publicly and pronounce in favour of that empire and that legislative Union under which they and their religion have enjoyed more toleration and more perfect liberty than their community have enjoyed in any other country in the world. I call on them to declare in favour of that legislative Union. I call on them to come forth and effectively protest against the offensive and defensive alliance which now apparently exists between the hierarchy of their Church and the machinery of rebellion and lawlessness and crime. I make this appeal with all sincerity, hoping and trusting that it may succeed; but if, from one cause or another, from motives which I cannot appreciate, or from calculations which I cannot fathom or grasp, if this appeal should fail in its effect or should fall upon deaf ears, then I will be no party to any undue sacrifice in support of that cause which I am anxious to defend. If my appeal to the loyal Roman Catholics, made thus publicly, remains neglected or unanswered, then, as an Englishman having filled a position which cannot be divested of responsibility, I would not hesitate, in such untoward circumstances, to confide all my hopes of the salvation of the nation and the security of the United Kingdom to the efforts of the Protestants in Ireland, and especially to the efforts of the Protestants of Ulster. I would not refrain from reviving and relying upon great historic memories. For nearly two hundred years your motto, your password, your watchword, and your cry has been ‘No surrender!’ For nearly two hundred years you have kept bright and burning the lamp of civil and religious liberty, and the flame of that lamp has been piously tended during succeeding generations. These memories have been handed down in Ulster families and Ulster homes. I ask you most solemnly, are these memories dead or living memories? The time may be ap-

proaching when you will have to show practically whether you are worthy guardians of the traditions committed to you. Now may be the time to show whether all those ceremonies and forms which are practised in Orange Lodges are really living symbols, or only idle and meaningless ceremonies ; whether that which you have so carefully fostered is really the lamp of liberty—whether that flame is the undying and unquenchable fire of freedom. The time may be at hand when you will have to demonstrate this faith in a practical manner—when you will have to show that the path of honour and safety is still illuminated by the light of other days. It may be that this dark cloud which now is impending over Ireland will pass away without breaking. If it does, I believe you and your descendants will be safe for a long time to come. Her Majesty's Government hesitates. Mr. Gladstone asks for time, like Macbeth before the murder of Duncan. Mr. Gladstone, before he plunges the knife into the heart of the British Empire, reflects ; he hesitates. Nor do I think there is any one of sufficient influence and authority who can urge him on by saying, ' Give me the dagger.' I have no doubt that the demonstrations of to-day in Belfast will have a very useful effect not only on the public mind in England, but also on the ministerial mind, and many more of them must be held. And those demonstrations ought to be imposing, not only from their numbers, but also for their orderly character. We are essentially a party of law and order, and any violent action resorted to prematurely or without the most obvious and overwhelming necessity might have the most fatal and damaging effect upon the cause which we so dearly value, and might alienate forces whose assistance would be beyond all price. The Loyalists in Ulster should wait and watch—organise and prepare. Diligence and vigilance ought to be your watchword, so that the blow, if it does come, may not come upon you as a thief in the night, and may not find you unready and taken by surprise. I believe that this storm will blow over, and that the vessel of the Union will emerge with her Loyalist crew stronger than before ; but it is right and useful that I should add, that if the struggle should continue, and if my conclusions should turn out to be wrong, then I am of opinion that the

struggle is not likely to remain within the lines of what we are accustomed to look upon as constitutional action. No portentous change such as the Repeal of the Union, no change so gigantic, could be accomplished by the mere passing of a law. The history of the United States will teach us a different lesson, and if it should turn out that the Parliament of the United Kingdom was so recreant from all its high duties, and that the British nation was so apostate to traditions of honour and courage, as to hand over the Loyalists of Ireland to the domination of an Assembly in Dublin which must be to them a foreign and an alien assembly, if it should be within the design of Providence to place upon you and your fellow-Loyalists so heavy a trial, then, gentlemen, I do not hesitate to tell you most truly that in that dark hour there will not be wanting to you those in England who would be willing to cast in their lot with you, and who, whatever the result, will share your fortunes and your fate.

## THE 'UNION PARTY' SUGGESTED.

MANCHESTER, MARCH 3, 1886.

[In this speech Lord Randolph Churchill reviewed the chief incidents connected with the Government of India during his period of office, and again discussed the Irish question. Some abridgment has been necessary, but the very interesting part of the speech in which Lord Randolph first gave the name of the 'UNION PARTY' to the coalition opposed to separation is retained.]

NO doubt my tenure of office in the India Department was a very short one—only, I think, about seven months; but I can say, with some amount of personal pride, that a good deal was crammed into those seven months. Allusion has been made to most critical negotiations with Russia in respect of the frontier of Afghanistan, which were going on when Lord Salisbury acceded to office. I will tell you why they were critical—because the Government of Russia did not respect the Government of Mr. Gladstone; because the Government of Russia found the Government of Mr. Gladstone to be a Government which would yield, not only British territory, but, naturally enough, the territory of British allies; and because the Government of Russia thought that so long as the Government of Mr. Gladstone was in power they had only to ask and to receive. That is what made the negotiations with Russia critical. But when Lord Salisbury and his colleagues acceded to office, though the Government of Russia knew quite well that Lord Salisbury and his colleagues were not animated by the smallest spark of hostility to the great Russian Empire, but that they were determined that England should possess her just rights, and that the allies of England who were under the guardianship of

England should be protected at all costs, the Government of Russia respected the Government of Lord Salisbury, and persons who respect each other always remain friends. These negotiations were almost immediately put into peaceful training, and the state of things which was so dangerous at one time that you actually had to vote eleven millions of money for preparations for war with Russia was dealt with and ameliorated, and danger of war with Russia passed away. The policy of protecting the Ameer of Afghanistan and of bringing the might of England to the defence of his territories is a policy which unites both parties in this country. Not only were those difficult negotiations brought to a close, but the policy of protecting the Indian frontier, of constructing fortifications and railways, was actively initiated and pushed forward; not only that, but, I am happy to say, arrangements were made for very large and extensive military manœuvres in India—manœuvres which have not excited quite so much attention as they deserve to excite in this country, but which brought together a larger British army than India has ever seen, and which have been most valuable to the officers engaged, and have been a theme of admiration to the agents of many foreign Powers who were invited to witness them. It was not only in war that the policy of the late Government towards India was exhibited. I am thankful to say that the construction of two most important Indian railways was sanctioned, and is now being actively proceeded with; and there is nothing more satisfactory in the state of India, nothing more promising for her future, than the development of the railway system and the profits which the present railway systems pay to the shareholders.

There is another matter which, I think, would interest you in Lancashire, and which has not, as far as I am aware, attracted any amount of public attention. It fell to my lot to be able to take up, with a very great amount of success, aided most cordially by Lord Salisbury, a project for opening up a new market to British industry. I allude to the opening up of the great market of Tibet. There is a population in Tibet which is capable of absorbing a very large amount of English goods, and especially Lancashire goods. But, owing

to the jealousy of the Chinese, that market was completely closed for many years to British commerce. I am happy to inform you that a mission, which I originated, to Peking, has removed almost entirely all the jealousies of the Chinese with regard to the commerce between England and Tibet. Of course the Tory party is always taunted with being a party of annexation. It is always being taunted with being a party which wishes unduly to extend the territory and the liability of the British Empire. But I imagine that if you were to compare the annexations which have been made by the Liberals and the annexations made by the Tories in the last fifty years you would find the balance of prudence very much on the side of the Tory party. With regard to Burmah, we literally had no option. Not only was the conduct of King Thebaw utterly beyond all the limits of toleration, but there were undoubtedly certain subjects of France who, with or without the support or connivance of the French authorities, were establishing rights in that country which, if they had not been nipped in the bud, would have been rights which would have entitled them at a future time to the forcible and the armed protection of France. That was a state of things which no prudent Indian Government would tolerate for a moment. Thebaw had thrown himself into the hands of certain French adventurers. These adventurers were dealt with while they remained adventurers; we did not delay until they had become French subjects, acting with the support of France, and possessing legitimate claims on the protection of that country. That was why it was not possible to delay, and therefore King Thebaw's territories were invaded on the most legitimate ground that any Government ever had for invasion. Thebaw was deposed and the territory of Upper Burmah has been annexed to the British Crown. I believe that territory is capable of vast development, and that it is a territory abounding in riches of one kind or another—that it offers a fertile field for British enterprise and commerce. At the same time I would not have you build too sanguine expectations upon the immediate development of trade with Upper Burmah. It will probably take some years before order is thoroughly established in the country, and before life and property are completely secure.

It will probably take some years before the revenues of the country meet the expenses of administration. I had one enormous advantage. I had to deal with a Viceroy (Lord Dufferin) who, I have no hesitation in saying, has proved himself to be one of the most enlightened statesmen who ever left these shores for India. I was fortunate indeed that I had not to deal with a Viceroy like Lord Ripon—a foolish and arrogant doctrinaire Radical, who, in all the various phases of public life in which he has taken part, has betrayed an extravagant amount of mental instability. I have no hesitation in saying here, what I suspected before and what I told before, but I say it now with all the knowledge which I acquired during my stay at the India Office, that you cannot exaggerate, you can hardly overestimate, the harm which Lord Ripon did to the interests of your Indian Empire. By his folly and by his blindness, he not only brought the Russian army almost to the gates of India, but, for some inscrutable cause which I have never been able to understand, he carefully fomented with every circumstance of small ingenuity all those hatreds of race and religion and of dynasty which are so rife in India, and which it has been the object of the British Government since the days of the Indian Mutiny, if possible, to mitigate and to wipe away. All I would say before I leave Indian matters is this. There is no reason why you should be alarmed for the safety of your Indian Empire. The frontier has been put in a state of defence. The army has been increased. You have a viceroy who is capable of guarding all the best interests of India in the wisest possible manner. The only subject which, if I had remained at the India Office, would have continued to fill me with anxiety is the subject of Indian finance. Not that India is not perfectly solvent, not that India does not possess an elastic revenue; but there is a feature in Indian finance of a most mysterious and unaccountable nature, and one which few people are at all able to understand or to give any explanation of, and that is the continued fall in the value of silver. The continued fall in the price of the rupee is undoubtedly a source of extreme anxiety to Indian governors, and it will be for you in Lancashire, great as your trade is with India, enormous as your exports are, invaluable to you as that



possession is—it will be for you in Lancashire to turn your attention most anxiously to the most dark and apparently unfathomable question of the relative value of silver and gold, and to endeavour to ascertain by your ingenuity and by your experience whether some policy, in the nature of fixing permanently the relative value of those two metals, may not possibly not only bring security to the Indian finances, but may be a real remedy for our decaying trade, and may be a means for reviving British enterprise and British commerce.

There is another subject which I cannot pass by to-night. I allude to the depression of British trade, and in connection with the question of British trade I cannot help bringing before you the serious question of the unemployed in England. Vast numbers of British artisans—I regret to say greatly increasing numbers—from competition, free imports, and one cause or another, are unable by their skill and intelligence to earn their daily bread. That is perhaps one of the most serious questions which we in this generation have to consider. As to the numbers of the unemployed, I do not know what they may be in Manchester, but I know that in London and many other large towns they are very vast. It is a hard thing that a man who has brains and education and technical skill should not be able to utilise those talents so as to support himself and those who depend upon him, and it is a desperate and dangerous thing when the number of those persons has reached the proportions that it has to-day. Since 1832 you have had, as Mr. Gladstone is fond of reminding the public, thirteen Parliaments; and in two of those Parliaments only have the Tory party had a majority, and been able to work their way. In eleven Parliaments out of those thirteen the Liberal party had a majority, and in every one of those Parliaments the Liberal party has come forward with great promises of what they would do for the prosperity of English trade and commerce; but what is the ultimate result of it all? It is that you have such numbers of unemployed at the present day in almost every English large town as to constitute a most alarming social danger. That, I say, is worth your consideration. There was no object whatever which was nearer to the heart of

the late Government, to the heart of its members individually and collectively, there was no object on which they spent more time and study, than how they might use their powers so as to do something to revive British trade. The moment they came into office they determined to appoint a Royal Commission composed of all those men of 'light and leading' who would be willing to serve on it, so as if possible not only to investigate the causes of our decaying industry, but if possible to suggest remedies, and to find new sources and new markets for British industry. And they did more. Lord Salisbury, setting aside altogether a Treasury minute of Mr. Childers's, which to a great extent cramped the efforts of our agents abroad for fostering and encouraging British enterprise, sent special instructions to all our agents abroad that they were on every occasion to lose no opportunity of assisting British commerce either in the person of individuals or in the form of co-operative effort. More than that: it would probably have been the policy of Lord Salisbury and his colleagues, as will be seen from what he said the other day, to deal specially out of the reserves of the State by means of public works with the exceptional distress which now exists. At any rate, we would not have folded our hands and looked idly on. We would have tried to do something. What is the policy of the present Government? I do not think they have got any. They are so occupied with other matters that I do not think the question of the unemployed ever comes before them, except when certain violent persons choose to make riots in our streets.

[A review of election results followed, and Lord Randolph Churchill concluded thus:—]

I notice that in your programme it is stated that after these remarks of mine have been brought to a close the organ is to play 'Rule Britannia,' and I have no doubt that you will join in the chorus and that you will sing the classic words that 'Britons never shall be slaves.' It is of very little use the organ playing 'Rule Britannia,' and it is of very little use your singing that Britons never will be slaves, when at the present moment Britannia is not ruling, and when you who are here to-night, together with hundreds and thousands of your country-

men, are slaves, the political slaves, of the party of Mr. Parnell and of the portion of Ireland which is filled with deadly hatred of the Britannia of which you sing. It may be argued that I have pursued a somewhat dangerous line of argument, the natural answer to which, and one that might be put forward by Ireland, or that portion of Ireland which follows Mr. Parnell, might be, 'If you do not like our interference, we ask for nothing better than for a Parliament of our own. We do not want to interfere in English politics.' It might be that there are Scotch Radicals who will say, 'We do not want to interfere with your English policy, and we shall be very happy with a Parliament in Edinburgh.' The Welsh Radicals might say, 'Nothing would content us more than a Welsh Parliament at Carnarvon, where everybody should speak Welsh.' And they might all unite in saying, 'If you English do not like to be overruled, let us all have Parliaments of our own and we will leave you alone.' That undoubtedly would be an answer, but I think it would be a very superficial answer, and foolish advice to give to the people, and a very foolish policy for the English people to adopt. I think, to adopt a policy like that because we did not succeed in obtaining that predominance in the British Parliament we had a right to, we should be in the position of a person who cuts off his nose to spite his face. No: there is a much better remedy than that, and by adopting it England can undoubtedly claim her just rights in the Parliament of the United Kingdom; and that policy is that England should unite. Let all party differences, let records and traditions of party conflict be forgotten. Is it not obvious, is it not within your knowledge, that there is not the smallest perceptible difference of opinion between the moderate Liberal and the modern Tory? None whatever. Has not the time come when, in the face of these great dangers, those old differences and old quarrels and traditions should be forgotten? What is the position taken up by Sir Henry James and Lord Hartington? They say, 'We will join no cave, we will make no opposition to Mr. Gladstone'; and Sir Henry James intimated very clearly, 'We distrust the Tory party, and will not enter into any relations with them, and will consider no action with them for the common welfare of the country.' Is

that a rational or logical position? Is it not a childish position, a perpetuation of old feuds and old contests which now, though in old days of great meaning, are as senseless and stupid as the contest and tumult which seven centuries ago used to divide the circus at Constantinople between the Greens and the Blues, and which at the present day in the counties of Limerick and Tipperary divide the Irish on the merits of what are called respectively three-year-olds and four-years-olds. Is not the difference only in the name? Is there any rhyme or reason, when the highest interests of the empire are at stake, and the future fortunes of the country hang almost on the line these men may take—is it not foolish and imbecile to perpetuate these meaningless differences, which perhaps originated in old family quarrels, or perhaps are now perpetuated by mere personal dislike? That is not the attitude of the Tory party, that is not the attitude of Lord Salisbury and his late colleagues. Our position is this: we care nothing for office in itself except as a means to benefit the country. We do care for this—that there shall be a Government of England that shall conduct the policy of England on lines that commend themselves to reason and to common sense. If a Government is formed and carried on on these lines we care not who compose it. To that Government we give not only a party but a general support. That is how we approach those influential politicians who differ with Mr. Gladstone at the present time. We say: ‘Tell us what you want; dictate your terms. We believe in your hearts you are animated only by a desire for the welfare of the country; we believe you possess the capacity, mental and otherwise, for contributing to that welfare. If you like to form a Government yourselves we will support you. If, on the other hand, you wish for our personal co-operation in that Government, we will give it you. If there are persons to whom you object and whom you do not wish to serve with, those persons will stand aside cheerfully. Our object, and our one object, at the present time, in this time of enormous peril, is that the government of the Queen may be wisely carried on.’

I am glad to have this opportunity of asking you men of

Manchester, gathered together in this great hall, which has seen many famous and historic gatherings—I am glad to have this opportunity of asking you, who are perhaps as capable of giving a political opinion as any political community in the country: Do you not think that the time has arrived—and fully arrived—when we might seriously consider together how we might form a new political party in England? Do you not think that that party might be an essentially English party? I say English from no spirit of prejudice whatever. I mean a party which shall be essentially English in all those ideas of justice, of moderation, of freedom from prejudice, and of resolution which are the peculiarities of the English race. Do you not think that such a party might be formed which might combine all that is best of the politics of the Tory, the Whig, or the Liberal?—a party which should combine all that is best of what is denominated under those various headings; combine them all, whether they be principles or whether they be men; and might not we call that party by a new name—might not we call it the party of the Union? Members of that party might be known as Unionists. Our opponents are the party of Separation, and they may be known as 'Separatists,' because they are a party—I do not care whether you take Mr. Gladstone's scheme, or Mr. John Morley's scheme, or Mr. Chamberlain's scheme—who, in one form or another, would adopt a policy which would be equivalent to the restoration of the Heptarchy—a policy which would throw back our civilisation for centuries, and a policy which must inevitably destroy that great fabric of empire which those ten centuries have laboriously erected. I ask you to answer that proposition seriously. Let us go in for a party of Union, and it is not only to be a party of union of the United Kingdom, but it is also to be a party which supports as its great and main and leading principle union with our colonies and union with our Indian Empire. I offer this without further elaboration to your most earnest attention, because I believe that it is only by the union of all the subjects of the Queen in all parts of the world—that it is only by the re-invigorated co-operation, cohesion, and consolidation of all parts of the widely scattered British

Empire—that it is only by such a policy of union that you can hope to restore to your commerce and to your industries their lost prosperity. It is only by such a policy of union effectively and perseveringly carried out that you can hope to discharge successfully that gigantic duty of maintaining and of diffusing freedom, civilisation, and Christianity which an all-wise Providence has devolved upon the English-speaking millions of mankind.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S 'HOME RULE' BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 12, 1886.

[Mr. Gladstone introduced his famous Home Rule Bill, in a speech of marvellous power, on April 8, 1886, and the Land Purchase Bill—which was then declared to be an inseparable part of the scheme—eight days afterwards. The following speech was delivered in the first week of the debate.]

I DO not believe that if the youngest member of this House were to live as long as the oldest member of this House, and were during all that long period to have a seat in Parliament, he would ever be called upon to consider matters more momentous than are now before the House of Commons. A debate upon the relations—harmonious or otherwise—which exist, or ought to exist, between races, between peoples, between nations, cannot fail to be of a character most interesting, most exciting. It belongs essentially to the highest order of topics which can come under the notice of a free Parliament. It ought to be approached with caution and after exhaustive study. Such a debate is seldom carried on without a large admixture of passion and prejudice; but if these forces can to any extent be eliminated, the prospect of arriving at a possible solution of the problems that may be raised will be brighter and more assured. It is not my intention to weary the House by any close examination of the details of this measure, because I do not think any such examination would be at all suitable to a first-reading debate; because, in the second place, there is so much, even after the marvellous exposition of the First Lord of the Treasury,<sup>1</sup> which is left in doubt and mystery; and, in the third place, I must say that, after consideration and reconsideration of the Prime Minister's

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone.

speech, I am led irresistibly to the conclusion that the scheme now before the House appears, so far as I am informed, to involve such complicated, such inexplicable, such a multitudinous mass of contradictions and absurdities, that I feel certain, if it had not been proposed to the House by the high and illustrious authority of the First Lord of the Treasury, it would not have been for one moment seriously considered. There are to be found in the Bill, by a careful student, a great quantity of what I must call fanciful and eccentric guarantees and safeguards. I own I was a little astonished, and somewhat alarmed, by the apparent light-hearted acquiescence of the Irish party in the proposed guarantees and safeguards. Their attitude, so far as it has been represented hitherto, reminded me of the well-known story of Theodore Hook. When he went up to the University the Vice-Chancellor asked him whether he was prepared to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. 'Certainly,' he replied, 'forty, if you like.' That extraordinary manifestation of frivolity to some extent discomposed the University authorities. I take, as an illustration of those safeguards and guarantees, a very remarkable example. I would draw the attention of the House to the proposed composition of the new Irish Parliament. It is proposed by the Prime Minister that the new Irish Parliament shall be composed of two orders of members, elected by different constituencies. I have taken a great deal of trouble since Thursday night to consult the highest authorities I could get access to; and I believe I am right in saying, that if you search ancient and modern history through and through, you will find no precedent in the records of constitutional government for such a proposal. There is perhaps a precedent, but I doubt whether it is one which will be at all flattering to the dignity of the Irish Parliament. There is the synod of the Disestablished Church in Ireland that does, I believe, consist of two orders, acting separately and at times together. But, first, I do not think there is any connection or analogy between the synod of a disestablished Church and a deliberative and legislative secular assembly. Secondly, I have the authority of a distinguished member of the synod for stating that the separation of the two orders leads to the most constant deadlock and the most protracted discussion. However, the



first order in this new Parliament is intended by the First Lord of the Treasury specially to represent property; and it is a remarkable thing, and one well worthy of the attention of the Radical party below the gangway, that the leader of the Liberal party—a leader who certainly approximates on many occasions to the more advanced tendencies of that party—should at this time propose for the constitution of a representative assembly so reactionary and so discarded a machinery as property qualifications. I would also remark in passing that the peculiar rating and property qualification which is proposed for the electors does not necessarily protect the Protestant minorities. I have it on authority that I can trust that there are many hundreds of the farmers of Ulster who would not be entitled to vote for the order which is intended specially to represent the minority, whereas there would be hundreds of the cattle graziers of Limerick, Cork, Tipperary, and Meath who would vote in the election of that order.

The second order of the proposed House of Commons certainly does not represent property, and the arrangement is that these orders are to sit and vote together, but that either order can at any time demand separate voting, and that either order can veto the action of the other order. May I be allowed to put that into operation? I suppose the meeting of the Irish Parliament, and I test this curious arrangement on three points. I take first the election of the Speaker. Obviously, the election of a Speaker may have a great deal to do with the protection of minorities; and it is also perfectly possible that one order may prefer one person as Speaker and the other order may prefer another. As far as I can make out, this would be the result. The popular order would carry their Speaker. The property order would veto the election, and the election of a Speaker would be suspended for three or five years. I test it from another point of view, deeply interesting to the members of the Irish party. I test it on the point of procedure and the rules of debate. It is quite possible that a certain portion of the Irish Parliament in the second order might prefer certain procedure and rules of debate—they might support the rule of closure of debate. On the other hand, it is quite possible that

the first order might object. Again the veto comes in, and the procedure regulations and the rules of debate are suspended for three or five years. I test it by one more instance. I take the question of the Budget. I can well imagine the hon. member for Cork, as Irish Minister, placing before an Irish Parliament the financial arrangements for 1887; I can, without any great stretch of imagination, suppose that those arrangements may not possibly be altogether agreeable to the order specially representing property. That order demands separate voting, vetoes the Budget for three or five years, and thus the financial arrangements are suspended.

I come to another point, which, I think, is of the utmost importance. The Prime Minister took great credit to himself for maintaining what he called the fiscal unity of the United Kingdom. How has that been effected? It has been effected by retaining the power of voting the customs and excise in the hands of the British Government and the British Parliament; but this is to be done by the violation as regards Ireland of the most ancient British right, that taxation and representation should go together. What has been the reason for that change? The Prime Minister told us that it was because he was so extremely anxious to maintain the fiscal unity of the United Kingdom. It may be so. No doubt it was his desire; but I think there were other reasons not altogether independent of electioneering considerations. It would obviously be most imprudent that customs and excise should be handed over to an Irish Parliament, because the prospect of duties being placed on English manufactures and goods might not be viewed with favour by English electors. The arrangement appears to be this—that, if it is agreed to, the hon. member for Cork<sup>1</sup> and his party, acting on behalf of Ireland, and representing Ireland, sell to the British Government and the British Parliament for 1,400,000*l.* a year the inalienable right of a free people that representation and taxation should go together. The hon. member for Cork stated in interruption of the right hon. member for West Birmingham<sup>2</sup> that he considered the 1,400,000*l.* a year a valuable *quid pro quo*, and therefore he was not disposed to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Parnell.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chamberlain.

press the claim on behalf of the Irish Parliament. But the hon. member for Cork and his party, as I think I can show, do more than that. They sell for 1,400,000*l.* a year the power of the purse in the Irish Parliament. The arrangement is this. There are customs and excise in Ireland collected to the amount of 6,100,000*l.* a year, and out of that sum 3,500,000*l.* will be taken for the obligations to the Imperial Exchequer, leaving a balance of over 3,000,000*l.* which is to be paid over by the Imperial officials into the Irish Treasury, beyond the control of the Irish Parliament, not voted by the Irish Parliament, and, for all I know, not controlled, even indirectly, by the Irish Parliament, but absolutely in the power of the Irish Government. In addition to that, there will be also in the hands of the Irish Government a non-tax revenue amounting to just over 1,000,000*l.* a year. Therefore, I make out that under the proposed arrangement the Irish Government will have in their hands, practically independent of the Irish Parliament, something a little over 3,000,000*l.* a year, and in good years considerably more. Now, is that not an extraordinary constitution to propose? The cost of civil government in Ireland is estimated by the Prime Minister at two and a half millions; so that it comes to this—that the Irish Government will have at their undisputed control more than enough money to carry on the government of Ireland without the aid of the Parliament at all; and it would be perfectly open to the Irish Government to dismiss the Parliament and never summon it at all. I shall be glad to know what is the view the Radical and Irish members take of the proposal that the customs and the excise should be voted for a period of years and should be handed over absolutely to the control of the Irish Treasury. I would also point out to the hon. member for Cork, that the 1,400,000*l.* a year which he proposes to obtain as the price for the considerable sacrifice on his part is of an extremely illusory and precarious character. It may be largely affected by the importation to England of spirits in bond. It may be largely affected by the diminution in the excise receipts—a diminution which, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will say, is going on very rapidly at the present moment. It would also be largely affected by temperance legislation, not necessarily in

Ireland, but in England and Scotland. That is the price which the Irish pay for this arrangement, under which fiscal unity is maintained ; but what is the price which the English people pay for this arrangement ? I think it will be found that the price of the English people is far heavier. The effect of this arrangement, so far as I can make out, will be, if it is carried into effect, that the customs and excise duties of the whole of Great Britain will be stereotyped. It is possible that I may be wrong, but it appears to me that the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England will be very much cramped, if not altogether tied. What arises from this bargain ? The customs and the excise are to remain in the hands of the Imperial Parliament, and Ireland is to pay so much to England, and no more. I do not see how the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England can ever lower the customs and excise duties ; because if he does so he depletes and diminishes the resources out of which Ireland has got to pay her way and her tribute to England, and he takes that course without the Irish being represented in Parliament. But, further, I do not see how the Chancellor of the Exchequer can raise the customs and the excise duties ; because if he does so he forces on the Irish a taxation which they do not want and a surplus revenue which possibly they will not require. I may be told, ‘Oh, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in that case will enter into negotiations with the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament and come to an agreement with them.’ But what does that come to ? It comes to this—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, wishing to deal with revenue amounting to one-half of the whole of our resources, cannot really deal with the revenue with any freedom, or indeed with freedom at all, unless he goes to Dublin and sues for permission from the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament. I want to know, in that case, what becomes of the supremacy of the British Parliament.

So much at present for the details of the Bill, and I come now to its great principle. What is the principle of this Bill ? I hold, with a good deal of confidence, that the principle of the Bill is Repeal. The Prime Minister on Thursday afternoon stated that it was not the intention or desire of the Government to repeal

the Act of Union. He said that he only meant to modify it in certain particulars. If it had not been the Prime Minister who made that statement, if it had been any ordinary person, I could hardly have prevented myself from interrupting to ask whether he had read the Act of Union. It is possible that many hon. members have not been able to refer to the text of the Act of Union; anyhow, as the Act of Union is called in question, the House will allow me to direct its attention to its articles. The first article of the Union is: 'That it be the first article of the Union of the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland that the said kingdoms shall, on the 1st day of January, which shall be in the year of our Lord 1801, and for ever after, be united into one kingdom by the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.' Well, sir, but what does that expression mean? What did the framers of this Act mean by the unity of the United Kingdom? Was it to be a union of the United Kingdom for no practical purpose whatever, or was it to be a union of the United Kingdom for all those practical purposes for which England and Ireland entered into it? How will you maintain the unity of the United Kingdom now if you pass this Bill into law? In a most singular and curious way. You will maintain it by excluding summarily one portion—a portion which, under certain circumstances, might be very prosperous—a portion inhabited by five millions of people—from any share and any voice, and for all time, in the discussion of any foreign, any colonial, any commercial, and any imperial affairs. And then I am told that the unity of the United Kingdom is maintained and that the Act of Union is not repealed! But I go on to the next article, the second, which provides for the succession to the Crown; and I would only point out on that matter that if, in the course of time, the House of Commons should be called on to face a great crisis as regards the succession to the Crown, as it had to do in the beginning of the eighteenth century, Ireland will under this Bill have no voice in that important matter. The Imperial Parliament can impose—if such a crisis were to arise—any monarch upon Ireland which it chooses, and Ireland has nothing to say to it; and yet I am told that the unity of the United Kingdom is maintained! I proceed to the most impor-

tant article of the Act of Union. The third article is as follows; it is very short, and it is the main article of the Act: 'That it be the third article of the Union that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be called the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.' It is provided by the Act of Union that Ireland is to be represented in the same Parliament as the people of England and Scotland, and under this Bill it is provided that the Irish people, for all purposes whatever, and for all time, shall not be represented at Westminster. And yet we are told by the Prime Minister that this is not Repeal! The Prime Minister declared in his speech that the supremacy of Parliament would not be impaired in the slightest degree. But I do not understand what is really meant by 'Parliament' in this case. Does he mean the Parliament that remains at Westminster? Because, after this Bill comes into operation, the Parliament that remains at Westminster, and which will be for all intents and purposes the Imperial Parliament, can no longer make any laws for Ireland except on certain limited and specified points. It cannot, with these exceptions, make a law or repeal a law for Ireland. Suppose that the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament encounter some little difficulty—which may possibly be the case—in asserting their authority or in maintaining their authority in certain parts of Ulster; suppose that the Government of the hon. member for Cork is compelled by this difficulty to bring in some measure for the disarmament of Ulster, or for the abolition of trial by jury in Ulster, or for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus in that part of the country. The Imperial Parliament cannot say one word. Even the prerogatives of the Crown of assent or veto may be delegated to the Viceroy, and the Imperial Parliament will have no official knowledge of such a strange and alarming state of things. Not a word can the Imperial Parliament say; and the grand result of all this turns out to be that the protection of the lives, the liberties, and the property of every man, woman, and child in Ireland passes absolutely and for ever from the jurisdiction of the Imperial Parliament. And yet I am told, and the House of Commons is told, and we are expected to believe with the

unreasoning blind credulity of an African negro, who may possibly think he is listening to the voice of divine infallibility—we are expected to believe and to receive without question the statement that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is not impaired in the smallest degree! There is another aspect, looking at the scheme as a whole, in which it is most strangely illogical. You find, if you look at the scheme carefully, an enormous amount of giving with one hand and taking away with the other. You find the most curious manifestation of exuberant confidence combined simultaneously with the manifestation of the most profound distrust. We are told to trust Ireland, and yet the Government tells us that Ireland is so irritated, so estranged from, so hostile to this country, that the very fact of that hostility forces us to give her this new Irish Government with an independent Parliament! Could there be a stronger exhibition of confidence when Ireland is in such a frame of mind? and ought not that perfect confidence to carry with it logically almost everything else that can be conceived? But what do we find? It really appears to me, if I may say it without rousing the impatience of hon. members below the gangway, that if I were an Irishman, looking at the scheme from a patriotic point of view as they claim to do, I could not help feeling that the honour and dignity of my country, which had asserted its right and won its claim to have an independent Parliament, was deeply wounded and affronted by the fact that this independent Parliament, under this Magna Charta of my country's liberties, was not to be trusted to deal with any matter arising out of several specified and most important points. It is not to be trusted to deal with any of the laws relating to trade and navigation. That would seem to betray ignorance of Irish history on the part of the Government. The cause of almost every dispute that arose between the Irish and the British Parliaments during the last five hundred years was the right claimed by the latter to legislate on matters relating to trade and navigation in Ireland; and it was that question, perhaps, more than anything else, that led to the movement of 1781. It was the concession of that right which procured the independence of the Grattan Parliament in 1782.

Notwithstanding that the Government had this historical knowledge before them, they deliberately refuse to trust the Irish Parliament with the control of any single matter relating to trade and navigation. What would be the effect of this? The principal exports of Ireland are cattle, sheep, and pigs; but if it were reported that pleuro-pneumonia or foot-and-mouth disease existed in Ireland, the British Government, under the new law, would be able to prohibit the export of any cattle from Ireland into England—an act which would probably bring immediate ruin to a large number of Irish farmers; and yet not a single Irish member would be able in any way to raise his voice against that act, or to give the Government representative information on the subject.

I now come to the last point relating to the Irish Parliament—I mean the question of Ulster. Some people call it loyal Ulster, some Protestant Ulster, but all will call it prosperous Ulster. I think that, looking at it from the revenue point of view alone, I should be justified in calling Ulster the heart of Ireland. Hon. members below the gangway cheer ironically; but I wish to know whether, in their opinion, the Irish Government would be able to pay their way if Ulster were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Irish Parliament. But, positively, we are informed that the Government have not been able to come to a decision as to the fate of Ulster—it is left, as the Prime Minister said, for careful, unprejudiced future consideration. The fate of Ulster is left to the scramble of Committee. Although the Government have pondered over this matter for weeks, and although they have had every kind of information before them, they have been unable to arrive at a conclusion on the subject. That is one of the most convincing proofs of the almost hopelessly insoluble character of this problem of Home Rule.

Finally, I ask the House to consider how the measure is proposed, and in what manner it comes before us. The Prime Minister said on Thursday that it would be necessary to place this proposal for extensive change on the most broad and solid grounds. In that we all agree; but what were the grounds which were put forward by the Prime Minister as broad and solid? If



we judge them solely by the wealth of eloquence, exposition, and illustration with which they were presented, then I admit their claim to breadth and solidity; but if we strip them of their rhetorical ornamentations and analyse them as they stand by themselves, then I think the House will be surprised to find how incredibly slender they are on which to base so vast an organic change. The right hon. gentleman put forward four grounds in support of his proposal. The first was the non-renewal of the Crimes Act by the late Government. That ground particularly recommends itself to the Chancellor of the Exchequer,<sup>1</sup> I know. (The Chancellor of the Exchequer: 'Yes.' Cheers and laughter.) Heaven forbid that I should weary the House by re-opening that endless controversy! I will content myself with one remark. The Prime Minister said the fact that that Act was not renewed was one of immeasurable historical significance. But why was it of more historical significance than the fact that the right hon. gentleman's Government did not renew the Crimes Act which expired in 1880? Why was our action in not renewing the Act in 1885 of such historical significance that you were to base the Repeal of the Union upon it, when your conduct in not renewing the Act in 1880 was of no significance whatever? The second ground put forward by the right hon. gentleman is stronger—it is the presence in this House of 86 members belonging to the Irish National party. In the first place, it does not appear to be absolutely demonstrated why 86 members should on any single proposition prevail over the voices of 584 members. In the second place, while I fully admit to any extent within reason the formidable character of that party, and the power which it can exercise in the Imperial Parliament, I take leave to doubt the permanence of that formidable character. Any study of Irish history will show that no Irish political party has ever held together for long. Resistance to any Irish political party has always strained it, and has ultimately destroyed it. I take the party of Mr. O'Connell in 1835. Nothing could have appeared more formidable than that party at that time; and yet it broke up, and Mr. O'Connell died abroad, as some said, of a broken heart. Then

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Harcourt.

take the party of Mr. Butt. In 1874 he came back to Parliament nominally at the head of a party 50 or 60 strong, and the hon. member for Cork can tell the House what the fate of that party was. I had the honour of knowing Mr. Butt personally. I saw him not long before he died, and I can affirm that he, like Mr. O'Connell, died in the deepest distress of mind with regard to the political fate of his party. I now take what I will call the first party of the hon. member for Cork, which made its appearance in 1880. Before that Parliament met that party came together and elected the hon. member for Cork to be their leader. (Mr. Parnell: 'After Mr. Butt's death.') Yes, and they came back to this Parliament apparently united, and numbering some sixty votes. But the Parliament had not been six months in session before that party was sharply divided—and sharply divided it remained during the whole of the last Parliament. The present party of the hon. member for Cork is a formidable and numerous party; but it seems to me that the hon. member for Cork is himself aware of the great danger of disunion, because he has taken a step hitherto unknown to the Parliamentary life of the United Kingdom. Every member of the hon. member's party takes a solemn and binding pledge that he will vote in a particular manner. (Cries of 'No' from some Irish members.) Hon. members will have an opportunity of answering me if I am wrong; but, speaking from the knowledge which I possess, I affirm that a pledge never given before has been given by every Irish member; and the fact that such a pledge has been exacted makes it impossible to suppose that the party of the hon. member for Cork is free from the hereditary tendency to disunion. That party has not yet been tried. It has only just appeared, and I cannot admit that the mere clamour of this party in Parliament is sufficient, before they have even formulated any clear demands, to cause the fabric of that Union which was constructed by Mr. Pitt, and which has been maintained without alteration by every succeeding Minister down to the present day, to fall to pieces as the walls of Jericho fell before the migrating masses of the Jews.

The third ground upon which the Prime Minister based his proposal was undoubtedly original. He based his third argu-

ment for repeal upon the existence of St. George's Channel. I remember an occasion some time ago when the Prime Minister visited Ireland, and when I had the honour of being presented to him. I remember that the weather was boisterous and tempestuous, and the right hon. gentleman had most excellent reasons for conceiving an undying animosity against St. George's Channel, and for making it, as it were, the scapegoat of his future Irish policy. I may remind the House that there have been many and long debates about the principle of the Union, when every argument for and against it has been used; but this is the very first time when the argument of geography has been summoned to the aid of Repeal. The Prime Minister has converted the geographical argument from a weapon of defence, which it has hitherto always been in the hands of Unionists, into a weapon of offence. If the House will recollect the difficulties which attended the transit between Dublin and London in the year 1800, when it took a man sometimes six weeks to make the journey, and compare them with the ease and the rapidity of the transit now, hon. members will be slow to admit that the arguments which were good enough for the construction of the Union in 1800 have been weakened by the invention of the steam-engine, the railway, and the telegraph. But the fourth ground taken up by the Prime Minister was the most curious of all. He said that we could not govern Ireland any longer because our law was discredited in that country, and reached the Irish people in a foreign aspect and a foreign garb. It is sad to hear the Prime Minister of this country proclaim that the Irish are alien to the English and Scotch, and that the English and Scotch are alien to the Irish. The First Lord of the Treasury was in Parliament when Lord Lyndhurst denounced the Irish as aliens in race, religion, and language; and when Mr. Sheil in this House, pointing to Lord Lyndhurst sitting under the gallery, created the most extraordinary scene, speaking on behalf of the whole Irish nation, by repudiating with the utmost vigour the construction which was then put upon Lord Lyndhurst's words, and which I can now legitimately draw from the arguments of the Prime Minister. But is it not still more melancholy when the First Minister of the Crown, who makes this

despairing confession, is one who has striven for so many years to remove all grounds of alienation? Is not this the most complete confession of utter and hopeless failure of efforts which may be called without exaggeration the efforts of a lifetime? If the confession were limited merely to a confession it would be sad enough, but when it is accompanied by a new policy it is a confession of a nature to cause the House to pause. The Prime Minister seemed to me to forget how fatal a confession it was for his own proposal. In what aspect and in what garb will this Magna Charta go to Ireland? Surely, it will have the same aspect and the same garb which the Prime Minister ascribes to the measures for municipal reform, Parliamentary reform, the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and for the alteration of the land laws, all of which, the Prime Minister tells us, are discredited in Ireland. Assuming that the present Bill were to pass into law, the relations between the two countries would depend upon the faithful execution of the compact; but, according to the Prime Minister, speaking with an experience of fifty years, this Magna Charta is likely to be discredited and repudiated because it goes to Ireland in a foreign aspect and foreign garb. These were the four main grounds put forward by the Prime Minister.

But the Chief Secretary<sup>1</sup> supplied a fifth. He said, 'If you reject this Bill and turn us out of office you will be doing that which the desperadoes whom you fear most desire.' He intimated that the consequences would be a no-rent manifesto, dynamite explosions, and a great outbreak of crime and outrage. That is a tremendous intimation made by a Minister of the Crown responsible for the government of Ireland. The very fact of such an intimation being made might be held by ill-disposed persons to justify the fulfilment of the prophecy. Not only might it be so held by ill-disposed persons, but it might to some extent lead the House to the conclusion that what the Prime Minister called the motor muscle of the policy now before the House is fear of these things, and that the Magna Charta which is to have such beneficent effects on the future of Ireland—this Magna Charta in the disguise of an act of grace—is in reality an act of terror. This prophecy of the right hon. gentleman

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Morley.

having been made to the House of Commons, and having been made a ground for passing this Bill, just let me for a moment deal with it. Let us see if these dangers are so very alarming that they ought in any way to influence our actions. Are these new dangers? Has the House of Commons had no experience of them? Have we never known of a 'no-rent manifesto'? Why, the First Lord of the Treasury himself had to encounter a no-rent manifesto in 1881, and the statesman<sup>1</sup> whose body on Friday last passed through Westminster Abbey on the way to its grave in the North encountered successfully a no-rent manifesto. Well, sir, let us deal with dynamite explosions. Have we had no experience of dynamite explosions? I see sitting opposite me the right hon. and learned gentleman the member for Bury,<sup>2</sup> who can tell the House that, with regard to dynamite explosions, we certainly were most providentially and almost miraculously preserved from an awful disaster. But the dynamiters, the people who were inculpated in these atrocities, are now undergoing what has been called a living death. Well, sir, an outburst of crime and outrage—has the House had no experience of that? I always understood that it was one of the great glories of the Government—of Lord Spencer—that he rapidly, successfully, and summarily put down a great outburst of crime and outrage in Ireland. Then, sir, as to assassination. I cannot forget that assassination in 1882 cost Ireland the life of one of her most faithful sons, and the House of Commons the life of one of its most valuable and respected members.<sup>3</sup> But, sir, the House of Commons ought not to be influenced with regard to its future policy by any such arguments. Assassination is one of the rarest incidents of modern political life. It used to be a common method of political warfare; but the growth and progress of civilisation have demonstrated its utter folly and inutility. A man in public life ought not to be deterred from any public action by the knowledge that by some mischance some day or other he might be the mark of a lunatic or criminal, any more than anybody contemplating a railway journey would be deterred by the fear of an accident. Therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Forster.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry James.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish.

of all the grounds of policy put forward in support of this Bill, the ground advanced by the Chief Secretary I consider to be the weakest of all. There is only one argument for this policy which has any claim to breadth and solidity, and that is the argument that this measure has been produced by the Government of the Queen, of which the right hon. gentleman the member for Mid-Lothian is the head. That is an argument the breadth and solidity of which I am not prepared to recognise; but I do recognise the enormous advantage which is given to the Irish National party. I consider it to have been my good fortune to have heard and to have read many speeches and orations of the Prime Minister with regard to Ireland. Many of his most confident predictions, vaticinations and declarations are fresh in my mind. I have been more than once under what may be called the wand of the magician, and I know of no experience to which I can compare it except perhaps the taking of morphia. The sensations, while the operation is going on, are transcendent, but the recovery is bitter beyond conception. Well, sir, bringing the light of my experience of these declarations and vaticinations to bear on this policy, I challenge any one of the most devoted admirers or of the most ardent supporters of the Prime Minister to point out one single prediction of his with regard to Ireland which has been verified, or one single declaration of his which has been maintained. But if the light of that experience is not bright enough for us, if our blindness requires that the darkness of the future should be illumined by some friendly flash of light, I find the warning beacon in the speech of the Chief Secretary on Friday night. In alluding to the reminiscence called up by the right hon. member for West Birmingham<sup>1</sup> in regard to an expression of opinion by the Prime Minister at Newcastle many years ago, that Jefferson Davis had made a nation—the Chief Secretary admitted the error, but chided the cruelty of the recollection—and declared that in his opinion, speaking as an historian, history would deal leniently with the error of the Prime Minister, because when the annals of the century came to be written, they would show that in Italy, in Bulgaria, and also in Ireland the Prime Minister had

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chamberlain.

made nations. That describes exactly the position which the opponents of this Bill take up. We believe that if this measure passes into law, when the history of this century comes to be written—and it may not be many years hence, some of us even may live to read it—the result of this act will be decided to be that, as is the position of Italy towards Austria having been freed from the yoke of the Austrian—as is the position of Bulgaria towards Turkey having been freed from the yoke of the Sultan—so is the position of Ireland towards Great Britain having been freed from the supremacy of Parliament and from the sovereignty of the Queen. For my own part, I confidently declare I shall cheerfully raise my voice and give my vote against a policy which has, in my opinion, been unconstitutionally sprung upon an unprepared, an unwarned, and a justly startled people—against a measure so desperate and so insane.

## CAUSES AND OBJECTS OF THE UNION.

PADDINGTON, JUNE 26, 1886.

[This speech was delivered shortly after the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, on its second reading, by a majority of 30 (June 7). It presented an analysis of the Irish question from an historical point of view, and although some abridgment is indispensable here, the main portions of the argument are preserved. The results of the general election which followed in July are summarised in the general introduction to this work.]

PARLIAMENT has been to-day dissolved; that Parliament which you took your part in electing in November last; that Parliament which fully, more fully than any former Parliament, represented the British democracy; that Parliament from which you justly expected so much, after a few weeks' existence has been scattered to the winds; and again you are called upon, in the exercise of the highest rights of citizenship, to take your part in electing a new Parliament. Mr. Gladstone has dissolved Parliament, and he has appealed to the nation. He has put a question to the country—a question which you, in common with the five million voters of the United Kingdom, are called upon to answer. Mr. Gladstone says of that question that it raises the simplest issue which was ever put before the people. That is the only opinion during the whole of this controversy which Mr. Gladstone has uttered in which I entirely agree with him. It is, gentlemen, I assure you, the simplest issue—intensely grave, intensely momentous—on the decision of which the destinies of empires hang; but it is a simple question. It may be put in many ways with equal simplicity. You may put it in this way. Will you, the electors of Great Britain, who are now entrusted with supreme political power, maintain in its



present form, with all its present attributes, and in all its present might and majesty, the Imperial Parliament of your country, or will you break it up? Will you divide it into two parts? Will you create another Parliament, which may be subordinate or co-ordinate, as the case may be, and will you remove a portion, and an essential portion, of the Queen's dominions from under the supremacy of your ancient Imperial Parliament? That is one way of putting the question. You may put it in another way. Will you maintain the effective, practical unity of the United Kingdom, or will you divide the United Kingdom into two, as a house may be divided against itself? That is another way, and an equally simple way, of putting the question. There is yet a third way. Will you maintain your present arrangement of one supreme executive Government, responsible to one supreme legislative body for the whole of the United Kingdom, or will you have two executive Governments, independent of each other, in all probability opposed to each other—certainly rivals, and responsible to two separate legislative bodies? Now these are all simple ways of putting this simple question, upon which the country has to decide. And, for my own part, I confess freely that I cannot understand how any human being possessing an ordinary modicum of rational intelligence can have the smallest doubt as to how that simple question ought to be answered; but, unfortunately, we have to do with a man who, although he states the country has to decide on a simple issue, uses his extraordinary powers of argument and rhetoric for the purpose of confusing that issue, for the purpose of bewildering the mind of the country, and for the purpose of keeping back from the people the real nature of the issue which is submitted to them. That is the danger of the present political situation. The great authority on this matter, the man who appeals to the confidence of his country, the man who says he trusts his countrymen, and who denounces and despises his opponents for not trusting his countrymen—that man above all others leaves no artifice unresorted to for concealing the real truth of the matter from the mind of the country.

Now, how does Mr. Gladstone put this great question to the country? These are practically the words in which he appeals

to the constituencies—this is the manner in which he puts this simple question; and I pray your best attention. ‘Will you allow Ireland to manage exclusively Irish affairs by herself in her own way, and for her own interest, without being interfered with and overridden by England and by Scotland?’ Mr. Gladstone adds that if you do not answer that question in the affirmative, there is only one alternative and no other: that you must have twenty years of what he calls Cromwellian coercion in Ireland. He says that it will not be any use to resort to what he calls ‘bastard coercion.’ Well, now, bastard coercion is a very ugly phrase; but what does ‘bastard coercion’ mean? It merely means this—that in Ireland, as in every other portion of the civilised world, if certain persons choose to resort to murder, to assassination, to robbery, and to intimidation, those persons shall be brought to justice. That is all that it means. But Mr. Gladstone says that he will have no more of that. That, says Mr. Gladstone, is a bastard coercion; ‘the only alternative to my policy is what I call Cromwellian coercion.’ That is a startling statement, and it is very easy to use adjectives. People condemn me for using adjectives, but I never use an adjective without thinking of the meaning of that adjective. Let us examine this adjective Cromwellian, which he applies to coercion. Cromwellian coercion in Ireland means the method of governing Ireland which was pursued by Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector. What was that method? It was a method of governing Ireland by the utter and total extermination of the Celtic peasantry by massacre and by starvation. That was the deliberate object which the Lord Protector Cromwell put before himself when he went into Ireland to suppress Irish disaffection. But it was not original on the part of the Lord Protector. That was the method which had been tried by Queen Elizabeth when she suppressed the rebellion of the great Irish earls. It was the extermination utter and complete of the Celtic peasantry by massacre and by starvation. Mark you, Mr. Gladstone deliberately states in this nineteenth century that the only alternative to his statutory Parliament in Dublin, if you refuse to grant that Parliament, will be Cromwellian and Elizabethan coercion. That is the adjective Cromwellian

examined. What can be the condition of mind of a statesman who comes before his countrymen and says, 'If you do not adopt my method of governing Ireland there is nothing for you to do but to exterminate the Irish people'?

So much for the alternative coercive policy; and now if we go back to Mr. Gladstone's own policy—that Ireland is to manage exclusively Irish affairs by herself, in her own way, and in her own interests, without being interfered with or overridden by England or by Scotland—I do not suppose it is possible to put before the English people a more confused and complicated proposition. The question instantly arises, What is Ireland, and what are Irish affairs? I believe I am accurate in saying this, that there is no important political affair which can be legitimately or accurately called an exclusively Irish affair. The relations between Great Britain and Ireland are so close, they are so based on the arrangements and the customs of so many hundreds of years, that there is no Irish affair which could be dealt with by an Irish body that would not more or less directly affect British affairs and interests. However, leaving that point for a moment—the definition of Irish affairs—let us examine the question, What is Ireland? Ireland is an island. That may seem a truism, but it is absolutely necessary for me to lay that down at starting, for I believe that if Mr. Gladstone were to say to-morrow that Ireland is not an island, the whole of his followers would passionately repeat that Ireland was not an island, that it never had been an island, and that anybody who said it was an island was a liar and a slanderer, who ought to be immediately turned out of Parliament. Therefore I will lay that down at starting. I take it out of the range of Mr. Gladstone's destructive oratory. Ireland is separated from this country by a channel which at its narrowest part only measures fifteen miles. That geographical fact utterly disposes of all the analogies for purposes of constructive politics which are sometimes drawn from the case of Canada, which is distant from this country 3,000 miles, and from the case of Australia, which is distant from this country nearly 12,000 miles. It disposes of the ingenious analogy which one of the leading speakers on the part of the Government drew between Iceland and its relations to

Denmark, and Ireland and its relation to England. Iceland is distant from Denmark 1,200 miles, and you may as profitably say that the only difference between Ireland and Iceland is the difference between the consonant 'c' and the consonant 'r,' as to argue, for political purposes, that the distance of 1,200 miles is exactly the same as a distance of fifteen miles. Therefore I utterly put aside for all practical purposes the analogy which Government speakers draw from Canada, from Australia, and from Iceland. What is the population of Ireland? That is extremely important. The population of Ireland is very curiously composed. There is no analogy that I know of between the population of Ireland and the population of any other distinct community in the world. In Ireland we have, in the first place, a population divided into two most important classes. We have a gentry mainly Protestant, owners of the land mainly of Anglo-Saxon extraction, and with that gentry we have a powerful class of persons engaged in commerce who are also mainly Protestant, and mainly of Anglo-Saxon extraction. We find as a second class the peasantry, almost entirely Catholic, and largely of Celtic origin. That is one extraordinary peculiarity about Ireland. I know no analogy for it in any other country in the world. In Ireland we have no large or powerful middle class. It would be impossible to describe what the middle class of England has done for England. The middle class of England has sustained England through many great national perils. The middle class of England has carried the English Government forward on a path of progress and reform. But more than that: the middle class of England, by its power, by its spreading branches in all directions, and by its gradations, has fused into one great harmonious whole the classes who are able by their circumstances in life to enjoy themselves at leisure and the classes who are compelled by their circumstances of life to depend upon daily labour. It has made the English nation one great united indivisible community. Remember this when thinking about Ireland—there is there no great, powerful middle class. For political purposes, that element does not exist. Therefore in Ireland we find the gentry and the persons who are engaged in commerce, who are the possessors of the wealth

of Ireland, and who are extremely powerful from their history, and from their traditions, and their position; and in the next place, sharply opposed to them, we find the Catholic peasantry, who are extremely powerful from one point of view—that of numbers. They outnumber the former class in the proportion of three or four to one. That is the composition of the population of Ireland; and we must not forget that the first class—the gentry, and the persons who are engaged in commerce—are those who have generally been known to us as the English garrison in Ireland.

Now up to the time of the Union those two forces were sharply divided from each other. They were animated towards each other by the bitterest hostility and the most intense animosity. Up to the time of the Legislative Union there was in Ireland constantly recurring civil war, or commotions which almost attained to the dignity of civil war; but since the Legislative Union these two classes have been gradually coming together, gradually approaching each other. There has been since that union no civil war in Ireland, or anything approaching civil war. We have had from time to time disturbances in parts of Ireland, sporadic agrarian agitation, accompanied by outbursts of crime of a very serious nature; but the moment the British Government has put out its arm these outbursts of crime have speedily disappeared. We have had nothing since the time of the Legislative Union approaching to the civil commotion that existed before that time. [Here followed some quotations from Mr. Gladstone's speeches in support of this position, and Lord Randolph then continued:—] I have quoted the opinions of Mr. Gladstone at two great crises of Irish history in order to support my assertion that since the Union there has been an improvement in the social condition of Ireland, and that the two great parties in the population who had been so sharply divided were coming together. And why? What was the effect of the Legislative Union? We brought over the Parliamentary representatives of these two great classes of the population, and mixed them up in Westminster with our English, Scotch, and Welsh representatives, who together formed a great mediating influence and a great balancing power, which

prevented these two classes of the population from tyrannising over and oppressing each other. That was the real effect of the Legislative Union of Mr. Pitt. The balancing power was provided between two great opposing forces in Ireland, and the constant effect of that power, used with patience and perseverance, was to fuse these two classes into one. What is the proposal that Mr. Gladstone now makes to the country? He proposes to abolish and remove that great balancing power, that impartial judgment—to take the Irish members away from the influence of the English, Scotch, and Welsh members, and to send them back to their own country. And in reality this is the meaning of Mr. Gladstone's policy—to go back to the state of things which existed at the time of the Union, to remove the great buffer which exists between these two great powerful forces in Ireland, and to leave them face to face with each other. That is the meaning of the expression that Ireland is to manage her own affairs exclusively.

The question arises, What do you mean by Ireland managing her own affairs? Do you mean the Protestant gentry, the Protestant commercial classes, or do you mean the Catholic peasantry? Instantly the problem arises. It is no good to talk in this general way about Ireland managing her own affairs. If you are practical Englishmen you must examine what this means. Remember that it is absolutely impossible, if we withdraw our controlling, our mediating, and our balancing influence over these two forces, for them to unite together. They never can. You might just as well try to mix oil and water. Either one or the other will get the upper hand, and in either case you will have injustice, oppression, tyranny, and national misery. But it is really hard upon us that we should have to decide this question. One would think it was a new question—that it had never been presented to the English people before. The question has been presented to our forefathers before on two great occasions. Two hundred years ago the English tried the experiment of governing Ireland mainly by the Catholic classes of that country. The Parliament of Tyrconnel, the Parliament of James the Second, had a splendid chance of seizing hold upon the affections and the loyalty of the

Irish people. If the Parliament of Tyrconnel—which was a Catholic Parliament, which represented almost exclusively the Catholic population—if that Parliament had been animated by a spark of justice or a spark of wisdom or of common sense, the battle of the Boyne would in all probability never have been fought; but it was because that Parliament excelled every legislative assembly the world has ever seen in tyranny, in oppression, in injustice, and in cruelty, that the North of Ireland rebelled against that Parliament of Tyrconnel, which tried to put down the North of Ireland, and sent forth its armies, overran the North of Ireland, and oppressed the North of Ireland with military cruelty of every kind. But the city of Londonderry held out. It resisted; and the North of Ireland called in William of Orange, and he came over to Ireland, he fought the battle of the Boyne, he swept away the Parliament of Tyrconnel, and he brought on that Catholic Celtic Parliament the fate it richly merited. Therefore our forefathers tried in Ireland two hundred years ago the experiment of governing Ireland by a Celtic Parliament, and that experiment utterly failed and broke down. What succeeded it? It was attempted to govern Ireland by a Government of Anglo-Saxon Protestants; a Protestant Parliament was established in Ireland, and with it at the same time a purely British Government. How did that experiment succeed? It succeeded indifferently well as long as the Protestant Parliament of Ireland was not a real Parliament, as long as it was kept in complete subjection and had little real Parliamentary power; but from the year 1782, when England, at a moment of great national calamity and danger, was not able to resist the demands of the Protestant Parliament, and gave to it full and complete Parliamentary independence—from that year 1782 to the year 1800 the experiment of governing Ireland by an Anglo-Saxon Protestant Parliament utterly failed and broke down, so great was the incapacity and the incompetence and the bigotry of the Parliament of Grattan. There was never a greater delusion or a more false historical statement than to say that the Parliament of Grattan was a Parliament of religious tolerance. It passed Catholic emancipation, because that was absolutely forced on the Irish Parliament by the

British Government, and one of the great reasons which induced Mr. Pitt to favour the Union was because he knew that till that Parliament was abolished there would be no religious toleration in Ireland; so that the real reason and cause of the Legislative Union of Mr. Pitt was the incapacity and incompetence for the government of Ireland and for the protection of Ireland which was displayed by the Anglo-Saxon Protestant Parliament—an incapacity and incompetence which culminated in the bloody rebellion of 1798. People talk about the fraud, and the force, and the bribery which carried the Union. They were small causes, they were the oil on the wheels which made the project go through. The real cause was the fearful and bloody rebellion of 1798 and the terror of French invasion, both of which dangers the Anglo-Saxon Parliament was utterly unable to cope with. This is an historical aspect of the question which Mr. Gladstone never glances at.

Mr. Gladstone proposes to recur to the experiment of governing Ireland by the Celtic Catholics. He proposes to place the government of Ireland in the hands of the Celtic Catholic peasantry of Ireland; because, mark you, Mr. Gladstone's Ireland is the Ireland of the National League, and the National League, if it represents anything at all except crime and outrage and terror, if it has any popular element about it at all, represents the Catholic agricultural Celtic peasantry of Ireland. The argument which I wish to bring before you is this: if governing by Protestant ascendancy—which after all was governing Ireland by the wealthy, loyal, and educated classes—if that system of government utterly broke down, utterly failed, and to such an extent that in order to preserve our national existence we had to put a stop to it and to abolish it—if that was so, what is likely to be the result of government by Catholic ascendancy, which means government placed in the hands of the Celtic Catholic peasantry, possessing many fine qualities, but at the same time imperfectly educated, prone to superstition, a peasantry, moreover, which for a time has placed itself under the guidance of American adventurers, and which has for a time abandoned itself to the control of an unenlightened priesthood? We have tried the one and the other, and we are asked to go back



to an experiment made two hundred years ago. If our Protestant Government failed, is our Catholic Government likely to succeed? One or the other of these classes must govern Ireland if we come away. One or the other must have the upper hand. It must either be the Celtic Catholics or the Anglo-Saxon Protestants. They cannot possibly unite if they are left alone. We are told, and I entirely agree in the injunction, that we must not infuse religious bigotry into this question. God forbid that I should infuse religious bigotry into Ireland! There is plenty of religious bigotry in Ireland already, and the one thing which keeps down religious bigotry, which restrains it, which prevents its running to most frightful excesses, is the power of the Union and the power of the Imperial Parliament. In bringing before you the actual state of affairs, the true state of affairs in Ireland, I am not infusing religious bigotry into the question. I admire, I respect the Catholics of Ireland. I believe that the Catholics of Ireland, under good guidance, if they were let alone and had fair treatment, would be the most loyal of all the Queen's subjects. I respect the Protestants of Ireland, I respect their history, I respect their services and their loyalty to this country under immense difficulties; and in dwelling upon the fact that these two classes form the population of Ireland, I am not infusing religious bigotry into the Irish question. I am doing that which I respectfully ask you to do, and which Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues refuse to do—looking facts in the face. That is the great fact about Ireland, the fact which overwhelms the whole of this question—the unbridgeable chasm which exists in Ireland between two large portions of the population, the Anglo-Saxon Protestant and the Celtic Catholic. That is the Irish question. You have heard of the Irish question from time immemorial. Ever since we began to study politics we have heard of the Irish question. That is the Irish question, and there is no other. I recently was told by an Irish judge of an occasion some twenty years ago when Mr. Disraeli, in the course of a stormy Irish debate, taunted by Irish members with remaining silent, at length rose and with great gravity said, 'The Irish question is insoluble.' Then he sat down.

Mr. Disraeli meant that the Irish question was insoluble by Parliamentary debate or rapid legislation. But it is not in reality insoluble. It only demands from you the qualities of patience and perseverance. The great solution of the Irish question is the efflux of time. What is Mr. Gladstone's present demand to Englishmen and Scotchmen? That they should give up altogether the struggle upon which they have been so long engaged, and that they should proclaim to the world their impotence to govern this island of Ireland with its five million population. That is the demand. We govern India, we govern Australia, we govern Canada, we govern altogether three hundred millions of mankind, and Mr. Gladstone demands that we shall proclaim to the whole civilised world that the Anglo-Saxon race are unable to govern with any approach to decency or tranquillity five millions of the Irish people. And mark you, gentlemen, it is worse than that. Among the five millions of people whom Mr. Gladstone calls upon us to declare our inability to govern are no less than two millions who cling to us with a tenacity which surpasses loyalty, and who call upon us under no circumstances to surrender them to their foes. Positively it comes to this—that thirty millions of the inhabitants of Great Britain added to two millions of the inhabitants of Ireland are, if they yield to Mr. Gladstone's demands, to proclaim to the world their utter impotence to bring peace or tranquillity or prosperity to the remaining three millions of the Irish people. Was there ever a more ludicrous or absurd proposition? It only requires to be looked at in the right way. Mr. Gladstone asks us to abandon altogether, confessing our hopeless failure, the effort which for eighty-five years has been in operation, of holding the balance, the peaceful and tranquillising balance, between the two great forces of the population which I have described. On that effort we and our forefathers have spent millions of British taxes; to that effort our Parliament has devoted weeks, months, sessions, years of its time, years of its industry and application; to that effort many of our brightest and best statesmen have devoted—ay, some even have sacrificed—their lives: but our millions are to be thrown away utterly; the labours of our Parliament are to be treated as if they had never

been ; the lives of our best statesmen are to have been in vain ; all that effort, and all its results are to be abandoned. That is what Mr. Gladstone demands. Was there ever such a demand made upon the people before ? And what to my mind makes it all the more disgraceful and despicable—this demand is made, in all human probability, just at the moment when we are on the eve of a great and notorious success. For eighty-five years we have laboured, and we have poured out on Ireland all that we possess of common-sense, of wisdom, of liberality, of benevolence, and generosity. The seed has been sown ; the seed is struggling up among the stones, the boulders, and the rocks of faction and prejudice in Ireland, and with a modicum of patience we should reap a harvest the bounty of which you have no idea of. But we are asked now, on the eve of success, as I believe from my knowledge of Ireland, to fling away all that chance of success, to give it up for ever, and to treat Ireland as if our work had never taken place. We are passing through a very great crisis in the history of Ireland and England ; but if that crisis is safely passed, if these wild demands are firmly resisted, if the English people show only a percentage of the dogged perseverance of their forefathers, I am certain as I stand here that there lies before us an ocean of smooth sailing, of calm waters, and an era of peaceful and tranquil progress in Ireland.

We are told that the Legislative Union has been an utter failure. I deny that proposition. To judge of its merits you must compare it with the Government of the Celtic Catholic Parliament, and also of the Protestant Parliament. So compared, instead of being a failure, it has been a conspicuous and glorious success. The government of Ireland by any method which human ingenuity can conceive has been, and will always be, a work of marvellous difficulty ; but it has surely progressed, and Ireland has increased since the Union more rapidly in material prosperity than England or Scotland. If Lord Clare, the great champion of the Union, could come to life, he would indeed be surprised at the different appearance and state of the country now to what it was after a hundred years of the Protestant Parliament in Ireland. I know Ireland well, I have

lived for some years there, and have travelled in almost every county. You would be surprised if you could have any idea of its material prosperity. Compared with the state of the rural districts in England, I am certain that your verdict would be that the prosperity in most parts of Ireland is greater than that of England. There are parts of Ireland inhabited by a pauper population—a result springing from no fault of any political system, but from causes beyond the control of any political system—parts of Munster and Connaught where there is overpopulation, a tempestuous climate, and an ungrateful soil, all those constituting a disease which no political remedy can cure. But it is precisely in these parts that the National League has the least hold. Out of Ulster there is not a population more loyal and possessed of better qualities than that of the west coast of Ireland, and one more deserving of British benevolence and generosity. Besides her material progress, Ireland has made a remarkable advance in social and intellectual matters; and I protest against the Repeal of the Union, as it would ruin and utterly destroy the work we have been carrying on. If, in the name of ‘justice to Ireland’—which has covered many a crime and many a blunder—we were to withdraw from Ireland our controlling power, we would commit the greatest injustice that has ever been committed by one people upon another, and compared with it the Penal Laws and all the other wrongs would be microscopic. There is an Irish difficulty—a very grave difficulty—which will tax Parliaments and Governments, and may terminate Parliaments and Governments. But have the English nation never had difficulties before? Mr. Gladstone’s mode of meeting the difficulty is that which was so admirably described by Lord Salisbury as the policy of ‘scuttle.’ That was his policy in regard to the Afghan, the South African, and the Soudan difficulties. It is his old remedy, which the people of England have condemned over and over again. We do not believe in a policy of ‘scuttle.’ We believe in patience and perseverance. I know of no reason for scuttling out of Ireland except that there are eighty-five members in the House of Commons representing this Irish demand, and that these eighty-five members are absolutely necessary to keep Mr. Gladstone in office. In October last he

appealed to the country to give him a majority large enough to be independent of the eighty-five Irish members; now you hear of no such appeal; he now says he is going to fight shoulder to shoulder with eighty-five individuals who could not have got into the House of Commons, and could not remain there, unless they were supported by Yankee gold. It comes, therefore, to this: that Yankee gold is to decide the future destinies of Great Britain. Was it for this you passed three great Reform Bills and extended the circle of the suffrage to all classes of capable citizens? I cannot believe that the 'almighty dollar' is sufficiently almighty and omnipotent to destroy the power, might, and unity of the British Empire. But if it should, it will be time for those who take a higher view of politics to retire and give place to persons who are suited to these meaner and more despicable circumstances. We have heard a great deal about alternative proposals. What is wanted in Ireland is wonderfully little, and marvellously easy of attainment—only obedience to the ordinary law which binds every civilised society together; but between law and obedience to law stand eighty-five members of Parliament, the National League, and the reckless conspirators of America. These are the forces which prevent your attaining the one thing necessary to the prosperity of Ireland. These are the forces with which you have to contend.

## CONSERVATIVE POLICY IN IRELAND.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, AUGUST 19, 1886.

[Mr. Gladstone's Government having been defeated on the second reading of the 'Home Rule' Bill, by a vote of 341 to 311 (June 7), Parliament, in the ninth month of its existence, was dissolved, and the new elections were held in July. The final returns gave the following results: Conservatives, 316; Union Liberals, 78; Gladstonians, 191; Parnellites, 85; Unionist majority, 118. Mr. Gladstone's resignation was announced on July 19, and Lord Salisbury was sent for by the Queen on the 22nd. In the course of the next ten days he succeeded in forming his second Administration, Lord Randolph occupying the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the House of Commons. The new Parliament was opened on August 19, and the following speech was delivered on the first night, in reply to Mr. Gladstone.]

THE right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) alluded to the affairs of Burmah, and he appeared to imagine that the Government were experiencing greater difficulty in bringing that country into order than they anticipated when they assumed the responsibility of recommending its annexation. I have been somewhat responsible for recommending the annexation of that country, and I can say I never imagined that Burmah would be reduced to order till after a considerable period. It took no less than ten years to reduce Lower Burmah to order, though its state of civilisation was more advanced, and no doubt we must look forward to a long period before public order is established in the country recently annexed. On another point, the inference which the right hon. gentleman drew as to the omission from the speech of any reference to foreign affairs, that no grave or alarming question was now under the notice of her

Majesty's Government with regard to those matters, is a correct inference.

I will now proceed, if the House will allow me, to state the views of the Government on what the right hon. gentleman called rightly and properly the question of the day—the question of Ireland. But before doing this, I may be permitted to remark upon the somewhat doubtful compliment which the right hon. gentleman permitted himself to offer to the Government and gentlemen on this side of the House. The right hon. gentleman congratulated us on the different attitude which we held now and last January. He said there was a remarkable difference between the attitude we now held and the attitude which the late Conservative Government took up on January 26. He said that as far as the figures of crime go there is no reason for the change, and he could not imagine any satisfactory explanation of it. Well, has there been no change in the position of the Irish question since January last? Why, the largest and most momentous change which could take place has come over the Irish question since that date. Since January 26, the right hon. gentleman has taken the lead of the National party in Ireland, and to the cause of the Repeal of the Union the right hon. gentleman has brought over for the first time a very large majority of a great historic party. Is that no change? How does that affect, and how may the Government consider that it affects, the state of social order in Ireland? There has been long an organisation in Ireland which aims at the Repeal of the Union, and that organisation is worked from time to time by methods which this House has regarded as treasonable and criminal. But since the right hon. gentleman and his friends assumed the lead of the National party in Ireland, are not the Government right in presuming, at any rate for the time, that the methods of political agitation which are familiar to the right hon. gentleman, and are regarded as constitutional in this country, may be adopted by the party in Ireland hitherto unaccustomed to them? I hold that the Government are justified in assuming that the close, intimate, and indissoluble connection which now exists between the right hon. gentleman and the hon. member for Cork warrants that

presumption. The right hon. gentleman welcomed what he called our readiness for the first time to depart from the constant resort to coercion. The readiness of the right hon. gentleman to move away from the course of coercion is very recent. I have never observed, nor have the Irish members, I believe, observed, any reluctance heretofore on the right hon. gentleman's part to resort to coercion. Indeed, it was admitted by the Irish members that there was a greater reluctance among the Tories to resort to coercive legislation than had been displayed by the party to which the right hon. gentleman belongs. I cannot pass by without notice the tendency of the remarks of the right hon. gentleman as to the possible non-payment of rents in Ireland.

I regret he should have thought it his duty to make those remarks. I do not think that the making of them squared altogether with the rest of his speech, and certainly such remarks are extremely curious when we consider that they fell from the author of the Land Act of 1881—an Act which the right hon. gentleman, as the head of the Government and his party, solemnly guaranteed as a final settlement of the land question in Ireland. The right hon. gentleman anticipates that the judicial rents may not be paid by the tenants of Ireland. Having offered that remark to the House, he states that he is not qualified to give an opinion on the subject. If that is so, it is greatly to be regretted that he should have touched on the subject at all. Why anticipate a state of things which would be most formidable, when the very anticipation from such an authority as the right hon. gentleman might assist to produce those very results which we should all so deeply deplore? And now I will ask the House to attend while I explain the views of the Government on the Irish question. I will deal with that question in a manner which has become familiar to members of Parliament. I will deal with it as it presents itself to the Government under the three aspects—social order, the land question, and local government. There is this difference between the late Government and the present Government. The late Government were of opinion that these three questions were indissolubly connected, and their policy was to deal with them all by one measure. The present Government do not believe that the three questions are indisso-



lably connected, and they propose to treat them to a very large extent as totally separate and distinct. Social order we intend to treat as a question absolutely by itself. The Government are distinctly of opinion, and will not shrink from expressing it, that there is nothing in the law or in the government or the administration of Ireland which would warrant or excuse any serious disturbance of social order. I go to the land question, and I would remind the right hon. gentleman that it has only recently been the subject of large legislation, which we certainly have been led to hope would be a final settlement of the question. With regard to the question of local government, we wish to treat it as a question for the United Kingdom as a whole. But I come back to the first branch of the subject—namely, the present state of social order in Ireland. The House might be interested with some figures as to crime in Ireland generally. The right hon. gentleman himself quoted a few, but they were of a slightly misleading character. I take the total agrarian crimes for the first six months of this year and compare them with the total for the first six months of last year, and I find, as the right hon. gentleman pointed out, that there is an increase, not inconsiderable, of agrarian crime. The total for the six months of this year is 551, while the total for the first six months of last year was 399. But that increase is almost entirely due to one part of Ireland alone. I allude to the county of Kerry. If you subtract the figures of crime in the county of Kerry from the total amount of agrarian crime in Ireland, you will find that there has been a reduction, or at any rate no increase; but if I take the year 1881–82—a period when the right hon. gentleman was in power and was at the head of affairs—as a standard of acute disturbance of social order in Ireland, I find that, whereas the total of agrarian crimes for the first six months of this year is 551, in the first six months of 1881 it was 2,310. It is necessary for the right comprehension of the question that you should not only compare one period with another, but take great periods of disturbance and compare the present time with them. That is a general view; and although I think that many would agree—perhaps no one would deny—that the

amount of general agrarian crime in Ireland is larger considerably than it ought to be under a settled state of things, still I do not know whether, considering all the crises that Ireland has gone through, the present amount of agrarian crime is as serious as might have been expected.

I now ask the House to allow me to direct its attention to the disturbed districts in the south and west of Ireland. The cause of those disturbances, which, as I have said, have become chronic and acute, is due to intimidation, boycotting, and moonlighting. I will give to the House the figures relating to boycotting and moonlighting in general. There has been a very serious increase of crime in Kerry. It has increased in the first six months of this year as compared with the first six months of last year from the total of sixty-five agrarian offences to a total of 135—more than double. Boycotting in Kerry and Clare, which in July 1885 had only reached the number of sixty-two cases, in the present July has reached 124. Boycotting all over Ireland does not show the same serious augmentation. In 1886, the cases of whole or partial boycotting all over Ireland are 890, compared with 533 in 1885. But it is in Kerry where this feature of boycotting shows itself in its most unpleasant form, and the House will be curious to know the number of persons who are under the special protection of the police in Kerry, as it will illustrate very forcibly the state of terror which prevails in that part of Ireland. In July 1886 there were 145 persons who required protection, and 292 policemen were employed in that duty. In July 1885 the number was only fifty-six, the police occupied being 107. To show the number of police who are taken away from their duties in order to protect individuals, I may mention the case of Lord Kenmare, a most amiable, estimable Irish nobleman, a late colleague of the right hon. gentleman opposite. For the protection of his person, his residence, farms, &c., thirty-eight constables are specially employed. For the same purpose, in the case of another landowner in Kerry, thirty-two constables are engaged. This will reveal to the House pretty clearly what the state of affairs is in that part of Ireland; and, judging from the small number of arrests that have been made, and the growing boldness of

criminals, her Majesty's Government are unable to be absolutely certain that the executive machinery is as efficient as might be wished for the detection and prevention of crime or as adequate as the circumstances of the case require. In 1871 the right hon. gentleman opposite had to deal with a similar state of things in the county of Westmeath, and for that purpose he moved for and obtained a Committee to take secret evidence, and on the report of that Committee he suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in that county, and the result was a very rapid diminution of the crime and disorder in Westmeath. But her Majesty's Government are anxious—in fact, are resolved—to satisfy their minds fully on the point which I previously mentioned to the House before resorting to extreme measures. They intend to make an effort by means of the agencies within their power to force the moonlighters and criminals to desist from their lawless courses, or to take such measures as will bring them to speedy justice. With that view, her Majesty's Government have decided to appoint a special military officer of high rank to the command of the disturbed districts, with such powers as we believe will enable him to organise arrangements for the restoration of order and for the cessation of the reign of terror which there prevails. This general officer will be directly responsible to my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary; and the officer whom her Majesty's Government have selected, and who has consented to undertake the duty, is Sir Redvers Buller.<sup>1</sup> Both with regard to the disturbance of social order in those districts I have named, and with regard to Belfast, it is the determination of the Government to use to their very utmost all existing powers of the ordinary law—all the machinery, whether magisterial, police, or military, for the purpose of restoring or maintaining order—the first duty of the Government of every civilised community. But, this I can pledge the Government to: that at the very first moment that the Government becomes conscious that they are not fulfilling that which they regard as their highest duty, and that further power and strength are necessary—at that moment

<sup>1</sup> This appointment was condemned at the time by the Parnellite party; at a subsequent period they were never weary of summoning General Buller into court as their best friend.

they will come to Parliament and lay their case before it, and claim with all confidence from Parliament such legislation as they may deem to be necessary.

I now come to the land question. With regard to the land question in Ireland, the Government are aware that various allegations are being put forward with great vigour and great assurance from many quarters as to the condition of the Irish land question. We are informed, or we hear it said, that judicial rents under the Land Act were fixed at a great deal too high a rate, and we also hear it alleged that the fall in the price of produce has rendered tenants unable to pay those judicial rents, and we are told that there is now, or will soon be, a general failure to pay rent in Ireland. Her Majesty's Government are by no means satisfied that there is any serious reason for any one of these allegations. Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to admit that the judicial rents fixed by the Commissioners were at too high a rate. The Government are further of opinion that it is quite possible the fall in the prices of produce—I allude especially to the fall in the staple article of Irish produce, butter—may be due quite as much to careless or defective manufacture as to any general depreciation in prices. Then her Majesty's Government assume, as I think they are bound to assume, that the Commissioners under the Land Act, in fixing judicial rents for so long a period as fifteen years, left ample scope for any fall in prices. The view the Government take of the present position of the land question is that for all present purposes we take our stand on the Land Act of 1881, which was declared by its authors to be, and accepted by Parliament as, a final settlement of the land question. That Act, as supplemented by the Arrears Act of 1882 and as amended by the Land Purchase Act of 1885, her Majesty's Government regard as a very valid and binding contract, which was made at that time between the State on the one hand and the landlords and tenants of Ireland on the other, and the policy of her Majesty's Government will be to see that all legal obligations and all legal process arising out of that Act are strictly enforced and perfectly carried out so far as such action can come within the province of an executive Govern-

ment. If there are any persons in this House who are of opinion that there will be by the Government any interference with or suspension, by legislation or by neglect of executive action, of the right of landlords to recover their land in the event of the non-payment of rent, they fall into error. We are told that if we adopt a policy of that kind, there will be a general movement all over Ireland of passive resistance to the payment of rent. I take leave, in conjunction with my colleagues, to disbelieve that statement altogether and to disregard that menace. With regard to what the farmers have acquired under the Act of 1881, they have obtained a right possessing a distinct money value, which right the Government are equally bound to regard; and we do not believe that the farmers of Ireland would consent to take part in any such scheme as is threatened, which would sacrifice or imperil those rights. We think that the movement in favour of non-payment of rent of 1881 has no chance under present circumstances of being generally repeated, in consequence of the great change of circumstances which the farmers of Ireland have undergone since that time. That is the policy of the Government with regard to the land question in Ireland at the present time. I would wish to add this. It has been brought to the knowledge of her Majesty's present Government that a very large number of members of Parliament on both sides of the House and in both Houses have always entertained very serious doubts as to the economical soundness of the machinery for the valuation of rents provided by the Act of 1881. Doubts were expressed by many members of the Liberal party as to the economical soundness of the system of double ownership—doubts which were described with matchless force and eloquence by the right hon. gentleman the member for Mid-Lothian himself in 1870. Many members of his party doubted this part of the Land Act of 1881. We hold that the machinery of that Act was imperfect and of a rough and ready character, and that if it did contain anything of good, whatever good it did contain was damaged, impaired, and tainted by the violence, outrage, and crime in the midst of which, and in consequence of which, it was created and brought into operation. Even the advocates of that Act looked upon

it as being of a temporary character. The noble lord the present member for Rossendale<sup>1</sup> made a speech in which he described the character of the machinery for the valuation of rent as most temporary, as being what he called a *modus vivendi*, and as intended to tide over the period which was bound to elapse between the disestablishment of the system of double ownership and the establishment of a system of single ownership. Now, sir, her Majesty's Government are strongly of opinion—after all that has passed in connection with this land question, and in view of the very conflicting and strong opinions freely expressed from many and various quarters—that the time has arrived when they ought to have at their command, for their guidance in the future, authentic information of a distinctly official and weighty character as to the working of the Land Act and as to the present position of the land question in Ireland. Her Majesty's Government are aware that a great and widespread organisation has endeavoured, not without success, arbitrarily to control the working of that Act for their own ends; and they are aware that, at any rate with regard to a great part of Ireland, there does not exist at the present time perfect freedom of action in the rural community with regard to the sale or the cultivation or the hiring of land. For these and other reasons, the Government have decided to appoint a Royal Commission which shall, during this coming autumn and winter, investigate with all care, and knowledge, and experience the land system at present obtaining in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> We confidently hope that the report of this Commission may be furnished to the Government before the close of next spring. But a mistake will be made by any who hastily assume that the Government contemplate any further dealing with the land question in Ireland in the direction of any revision of judicial rent by the interposition of the State. We are rather bound to the other solution of the land question in Ireland—single ownership—which was the main object of the Act of 1881. It was the main object of the Act of 1885, which was concurred in by all parties in the House; and it was the main object of the Land Bill introduced by the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hartington.

<sup>2</sup> This was the Commission presided over by Lord Cowper.

right hon. gentleman opposite in the last Parliament. The system of single ownership of land in Ireland, we believe, may be the ultimate solution of most of the difficulties of the land question; and though her Majesty's Government will not be prepared, as far as they are at present informed, to extend the liabilities of the State as provided under the Act of 1885, they may be prepared to submit to the House proposals, if additional securities should be provided by local authorities, for a further outlay of public money.

There is another matter on which the Government are also resolved to acquire full and authentic information. It is a matter on which much has been said and written during many years. I allude to the development of the material resources of Ireland. The constant allegation made by men of all parties in Ireland has been that those resources have been neglected by the people and by the State, and that the capacity of Ireland for maintaining a much larger population even than she at present maintains is undoubted, if those material resources could be developed by the infusion of capital into Ireland. On this question her Majesty's Government propose to utilise the autumn and winter by procuring the very best information. Our inquiries will divide themselves into three distinct heads. The Commissioners will consider the possibility of the creation of a deep-sea fishing industry on the west coast of Ireland, by the construction of harbours of refuge, and the connection of those harbours with the main lines of rapid communication. The Government express no opinion as to the possibility of such a work. But it is not a proposal to be derided. If such a thing could be carried out, it would be worth a great effort and some risk on the part of Parliament, for it would, if successful, remove what has always been, and must always be, a source of intense anxiety to an Irish Government—viz. the extremely precarious position of the population on the west coast—a population, I will say, than whom none is more deserving of the sympathy and support of Parliament. In the second place, they would be especially directed to examine the railways, tramways, and road communication all over Ireland, and their extent and management as compared with those of other countries. The third

branch of the inquiry will be the question of arterial drainage, and whether those great drainage works which modern agriculture requires, and which are too considerable for the resources of particular localities, could be undertaken remuneratively by the State for the benefit of the community at large.

I come to the third question—that of the Irish local government, on which I can only say that it is the intention of her Majesty's Government to devote the recess, which we hope will be one of due length, to the careful consideration of the question of local government for the three kingdoms. When Parliament reassembles in the beginning of February next year the Government are sanguine that they will be prepared with definite proposals on that large question. Their object will be, as far as possible, to eliminate party feeling and to secure for the consideration of the question as large an amount of Parliamentary co-operation as can be obtained, so that whatever settlement may be arrived at it may not be claimed as a triumph of either party. On this question of local government I have nothing to add. We are perfectly certain to fall into no errors on account of undue haste. No amount of taunts, or jeers, or denunciation will make us budge one inch from that resolution. The great signposts of our policy are equality, similarity, and, if I may use such a word, simultaneity, as far as is practicable in the development of a genuinely popular system of local government in the four countries which form the United Kingdom. I have stated fully and frankly the main outlines of our policy. The basis of that policy is the restoration and the maintenance of social order in Ireland, and of individual freedom to the widest extent which social order will permit. To that we are determined, at all costs to ourselves as individuals, or as a Government, to adhere, relying on the support of a great political party. On that foundation our policy reposes; but there is yet another, a deeper, stronger, and wider foundation—I mean the verdict of the British people as delivered with no doubtful sound at the recent general election. The verdict of the people we take to have been unmistakably in favour of the maintenance of the Legislative Union between the two countries, of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and of the full and effective sove-



reignty of the Queen over the whole of the United Kingdom. That verdict, for the purposes of the Government, we take to be what Lord Salisbury called it, a final and irreversible verdict, the finality and irreversibility of which cannot be in the smallest degree impugned except after another appeal to the country. Upon it we base our policy, not only for Ireland, but for the United Kingdom and the British Empire as a whole, and by that policy so founded we, as a Government and as a party, will stand or fall.

## POLICY OF LORD SALISBURY'S FIRST MINISTRY.

DARTFORD, OCTOBER 2, 1886.

[The principles advocated in the following speech—which soon came to be known as the ‘Dartford programme’—had the full approval of Lord Randolph Churchill’s colleagues, but that important fact did not save the speech itself from attacks in various quarters which are usually believed to derive their inspiration from official sources. This singular repudiation before the public of a policy which in private had met with a tacit, though perhaps reluctant, assent, must still be regarded as one of the mysteries of contemporary politics. It will be observed that in this address, the first delivered to a general audience after Lord Randolph’s appointment to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, great stress is again laid on the absolute necessity of the nation getting its ‘money’s worth for the taxes’ exacted from it, and of effecting reductions in the expenditure. It will also be seen that an Allotments Bill, a Local Government Bill, and other measures which afterwards came before Parliament, were distinctly foreshadowed in this speech. It cannot, however, be said that at this time the measures in question were by any means out of reach of danger. Some passages on the necessity of reform in Parliamentary procedure are omitted, because similar arguments in fuller detail were submitted at Bradford in the speech which follows this.]

I HAVE to return you my very sincere and earnest thanks for the kind welcome which you have accorded to me this afternoon; and also I have to express my sense of the value which I attach to those recorded expressions of confidence in the form of addresses which the officers of your various associations have been kind enough to present to me. It has been my lot to be called upon to perform duties of a most anxious and difficult nature—duties which would be most anxious and difficult even to those who possessed a long experience and great

knowledge of public life, but which to one like me, who has no great experience of public affairs, and who has not been many years in Parliament, are, indeed, duties so anxious and so difficult that they could not be at all adequately performed unless I thought that I was sustained by a considerable body of public approval in this country. Undoubtedly addresses like those which you have given me are of immense value in signifying to me that I have not at any rate forfeited as yet any large measure of public confidence. It is my most pleasing duty, not only on my own behalf but on behalf of her Majesty's present Government, to express to you Kentish men our cordial and sincere congratulations on the signal and memorable victory which your exertions gained for the constitutional party at the general elections of 1885 and 1886. I do not know whether you have studied the statistics of the growth of constitutional principles in this great county of Kent. In the year 1868—when Mr. Disraeli appealed to the country after having passed a large measure of electoral reform—there were returned to Parliament from this county thirteen Liberals against eight Tories. In the year 1874 there was a slight improvement, because there were returned to Parliament thirteen Tories against eight Liberals. In 1880—a very dark year for the Conservative party—Kent held her own, for you returned sixteen Tories to Parliament against five Liberals; and in 1885, out of nineteen constituencies in the county of Kent, you did not return one single Gladstonian candidate, but by large, by overwhelming, by crushing majorities, you returned to Parliament eighteen Conservatives and one Liberal Unionist, and that unequalled position you managed to sustain at the last general election. That is really only a sign of what has been going on all over the country. There has been going on over the whole country a steady and sure growth of Constitutional principles, a steady and increasing indication of a popular belief in the value of the British Constitution. But I attach particular importance to this adhesion of the county of Kent to the Constitutional cause. The county of Kent is a county with many most interesting traditions—(A Voice: 'The garden of England.')

It is a county which is well termed the garden of England. It is a county of great wealth, a county of great homogeneity, and it is a county, if I may use such

an expression, of immense individuality. Mr. Gladstone claims that he has got on his side the whole of the civilised world. Well, gentlemen, I reply that he is welcome to the whole of the civilised world: but give me the county of Kent. I am not aware that the civilised world has any concrete voting power in the House of Commons, but I am aware that the county of Kent has a concrete voting power of nineteen members on the Constitutional side, and I say to Mr. Gladstone, 'You are perfectly welcome to the civilised world, and make as much as you can out of it, as long as you leave us the nineteen representatives of the county of Kent.' We must beware of one thing, however: we must not dwell too fondly on the past. Politics is not a science of the past; politics is the science of the future. You must use the past as a lever with which to manufacture the future. Politics is not a profession which consists in looking back; it is not a profession which consists in standing still: it is in this country essentially a profession of progress. Therefore, we must use our great victories in the past as a means of attaining others in the future; and I would warn you most earnestly against the dangers of over-confidence. It was over-confidence more than anything else which ruined the Conservative party in the year 1880. Seat after seat was thrown away at that time because members of the Conservative party and Conservative organisations thought that their power was irresistible, and that it was not necessary for them to make an effort. We have before us now a long road to travel. We have many ranges of political mountains of great difficulty to cross, and we must remember that 'he that putteth on his harness must not boast as he that taketh it off.' Our journey has only just begun; but there is much which ought to encourage us along our road. They say that a good beginning makes a good ending, and I think we have made a good beginning in this last session of Parliament. It will interest you to know that the present Government, which only commands a nominal majority over the Separatist Opposition of 90 votes, has been supported in forty-three divisions in the last session by an average majority of 100 votes. That is a satisfactory commencement. I do not know that we can look to maintaining that

majority through the sessions that are to come; but at any rate there we have got it up to now—an average recorded majority in support of the present Government of 100 members of the House of Commons. Undoubtedly, gentlemen, that has been greatly due to the unparalleled sacrifices and to the unequalled devotion of the Tory members to their duties in the House of Commons, at a time of the year when the performance of those duties was attended with every trial and every labour that you can imagine. It has also been due to the loyal support which we have received from the whole party of the Liberal Unionists.

Upon this fine autumn afternoon I do not propose to waste your time by alluding at length to the Separatist Opposition in the House of Commons. I really do not think they are worth powder and shot. An Opposition—a Parliamentary Opposition—more hopelessly demoralised, more hopelessly disintegrated, I have never seen and I have never read of. They have no leader and they have no policy. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that, and I ought to have put it in another way—they suffer from having too many leaders. The conduct of the Parliamentary Opposition reminds me of what used to be the conduct in the old days of the Dutch army. There used to be in command of the Dutch army a council of Dutch generals, and every day a new general took it in turn to command, and the consequence was that the Dutch army invariably suffered defeat. And so with the Parliamentary Opposition in the House of Commons. You have one day Mr. Parnell leading, and another day you have Mr. Labouchere, and another day you have Mr. Conybeare leading, and every now and then you have Sir William Harcourt leading, and occasionally, as a great treat, Mr. Gladstone drops in from Bavaria. They suffer from a plethora of leaders. Perhaps I was also wrong in saying that they have no policy. They have a policy, and their policy is this—to bring into discredit, to put a stop to, and, if possible, to demolish and destroy all Parliamentary government. That is their policy. I do not care how long they pursue that policy, because it is a policy which is doomed to failure. It is a policy which the British constituencies will never support, because they are attached to their Parliament, they are proud of their Parliament, and they are determined that their Parlia-

ment shall maintain the traditions which have been handed down to it. So much for the Parliamentary Opposition. Let me invite your attention to a more business-like question. Let me ask you for your patience and your indulgence while I examine with some detail the policy which the Government has pursued and which it hopes to pursue.

The policy which the Government has pursued up to now has been called by our opponents 'a policy of Royal Commissions.' I do not in the least regard that taunt. There is a very old proverb, 'Do not prophesy unless you know.' I will tell you a much better proverb, and I will take out a patent for it, and it is this: 'Do not legislate unless you know.' Now Mr. Gladstone—(A Voice: 'We are sick of his name.')

I am afraid that you will hear his name more than once in the course of my remarks. But the great feature of the legislation of that gentleman, whose name you are so sick of, was that he legislated by intuition, whereas the Conservative party, or rather the Unionist party, are determined to legislate only upon ascertained facts. You are aware that we have appointed four principal commissions to inquire into four great subjects. We have appointed two commissions for Ireland—one to examine into the operation of the recent land laws which have been passed for that country—a subject of most bitter and conflicting controversy—a subject upon which, without sound information, it would be impossible and insane for a Government to move. We have also appointed a commission to investigate the capacity of Ireland for development by public works on a remunerative scale and by the support of public credit. That is a commission from which I hope great things for the future of Ireland; and although the Parnellite party poured every kind of ridicule upon it, you may depend upon it that there are resources in Ireland which may be scientifically developed by the use of State credit, and the development of which must bring to the people of that country a large measure of prosperity. Let us take the United Kingdom. On two questions we have appointed commissions to inquire, and they are two questions of great public interest. In the first place, we want to know to what extent this long commercial and agricultural depression

may have been influenced, or caused, or affected by the great changes in the relative value of the precious metals. That is a subject most complicated, most difficult, most mysterious and dark. It is a subject upon which sound scientific information is absolutely essential. Then there is another inquiry, in which I take the greatest interest. We have appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the scale and cost of our system of government in this country. We know that the expenditure of this country has been increasing rapidly, and we want to be certain on one point—that we get our money's worth for the taxes which we spend; and we want to be perfectly certain that it is not in our power to make considerable reductions and simplifications of that expenditure. I do not know, gentlemen, what your opinions may be, but I frankly own that I anticipate much good from all these inquiries; and I feel certain that before long these inquiries will provide your Parliament with sound material for beneficial legislation.

I turn to the policy of the future. The main principle of that policy—and I pray you to bear this in mind, gentlemen—the main principle and the guiding motive of the policy of the Government in the future will be to maintain intact and unimpaired the union of the Unionist party. We know how much depends—how almost entirely the future of England depends—upon the union of the Unionist party; how every institution which we value, how all the liberties which we prize, are for the time bound up in the union of that party; and everything that we do, either in domestic or foreign affairs, will be subordinated to that cardinal principle, the union of the Unionist party. We know this, gentlemen—and I am not ashamed to state it before this great meeting—that we, the present Government, owe much of our existence and much of our efficiency to the Unionist Liberals. We recognise to the full the great sacrifices those gentlemen made—political sacrifices such as none of us have been called upon to undergo. We know well the odium they have incurred among their former political friends, and we consider it is our duty as a Government so to adapt our policy as to prove to the British people that the Unionist Liberals were right in the course which they took, and were justified in the

great political sacrifices which they made. I wish that they had found it in their power to join us effectively in the heavy labours of government. I regret that they have not yet found it in their power to share with us ministerial responsibilities. But at any rate it is our business to interpret their action on the best and highest ground for them, to attribute to their action the loftiest and most honourable motives, and to believe they are animated by no other desire than to maintain pure and intact their political power and independence, so as to rescue the great Liberal party—which has so sadly gone astray—from all the heresies and all the terrible errors into which Mr. Gladstone has led them. Once more I repeat, so that you may bear it in your memories, that the main, the guiding principles of the policy of the Government will be to preserve the union of the Unionist party.

Let us assume for the purpose of this meeting that the Government have been successful in effecting reforms in Parliamentary procedure and in laying the foundation for future legislation, and let us consider for a moment the various subjects of legislation which the present Government ought, in justice to the country, to undertake with honesty and energy. I think we ought to give a chief place to the legislative requirements of England and of Scotland. Ireland has occupied—I may say has monopolised—the time of Parliament during the last ten years nearly, and the requirements of England and Scotland have been much neglected, and great arrears of legislation have accumulated; and I think that it is the business of the Government to commence at once dealing with those arrears. There is one matter which seems to come first. I think you will all be of opinion that the Government will be justified in asking the attention of the House of Commons to legislation which will enable them and their supporters to redeem the promises and the pledges which they have made to the agricultural labourers of England. And it is the decided intention of the Government to introduce into Parliament a measure which should provide facilities, through the operation of local authorities, for the acquisition by the agricultural labourer of freehold plots and allotments of land. I do not



think that there ought to be much difficulty in passing such a measure. There is a great agreement among all parties as to the main lines of the measure, and I do not in the least wish to detract from any credit which may be justly given to men like Mr. Jesse Collings or Mr. Chamberlain, who were foremost in bringing this subject before the public mind of England. My hope is that that will be one of the first subjects dealt with by the present Government in the next session. There is another measure closely connected with that, and that is legislation by which facilities should be afforded for the sale of glebe lands. That is intimately connected with the allotment question. Not only would it, I think, have a beneficial effect upon the incomes of the clergy, as providing them with incomes more regular and more secure than what they obtain now from the cultivation or the letting of their glebe lands, but also those glebe lands would in many villages and many parts of England afford most convenient morsels of land to be divided among the agricultural labourers, either for freehold plots, or for allotments, or for cottage gardens; and that is a measure which I hope the Government will be able to introduce early next session. Now I come to a matter which is of great importance to you in Kent. I come to the question of tithes. (A Voice: 'Let the landlords pay them.') The good sense of the people of Kent has settled, I understand, in an equitable and satisfactory manner to all parties, the question which threatened in Kent to be a somewhat thorny one—the question of extraordinary tithes. And it will be necessary for the Government to give its attention to the general question of tithes over the whole of England and Wales. This much may perhaps be admitted, that the settlement of the tithe question which Parliament carried out about a generation ago has not proved, on the whole, in its working, to be a complete settlement; and it would appear that the intentions of Parliament at that time with regard to payment of tithe have not been altogether attained. I understand, however, from those who are well acquainted with the question, and who represent the receivers of the tithe, that it ought not to be difficult to provide a much more simple and much more direct mode of payment of the tithe, and a method

which should not in any degree prove to be a vexatious or harassing method to the occupier of land. That is all I can say upon the tithe question now, but I rather expect that by legislation on the question, without doing any injustice to either the landlord or the clergy, it may be possible for a great majority of the landlords of this country to take upon themselves the direct burden of the incidence of tithe.

There is another measure which I hope the Government may be able to deal with, and which, I believe, is one of great interest to many here. It is of enormous interest to the agricultural community—I mean the question of railway rates. I do not think there ought to be very great difficulty in coming to an agreement upon the question of the incidence of railway rates. The late Government had a Bill in hand for dealing with the question, and the present Government have a Bill in hand for that purpose; and my own belief is, that if the railway companies are approached fairly, if they are treated with justice and with consideration, they would not be unwilling to co-operate in a more equitable regulation of the railway rates as regards the commercial and the agricultural interests of this country. The railway rates at the present moment operate in a way which Parliament did not intend when it gave the railway companies their powers. Without doubt they somehow manage to give to the foreign importer and to the foreign producer unfair advantages over the home producer. It is a difficult question, and the railway companies, like other corporations or property-holders, have rights which have been conferred upon them by Parliament, and arbitrary and unjust treatment of them would strike a blow at all property in this country, and would re-act on the very interest you desire to serve. But still, I would say to the railway companies they had better bear in mind the Scriptural text, ‘Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him.’ Because if the present grievances which the commercial and the manufacturing and agricultural community complain of with regard to the regulation of railway rates are suffered to go on undealt with, and growing and developing, then it is possible that the rights and the property of railway companies may be placed in jeopardy.

Those measures which I have alluded to are all, I think, though important, nevertheless minor measures—measures which ought not to excite great party controversy, and which ought to be passed without much difficulty through Parliament. And they are measures which certainly are urgently demanded. There is another measure which the country requires also, and that is a measure which shall provide for a cheaper mode of land transfer and for cheaper methods of acquiring landed property by the individual, and for the registration of title. All I can say on that point is this, that the Lord Chancellor of the present Government is enthusiastic on the question, and I understand that he has ideas. And you may depend upon it that when a Lord Chancellor of England is enthusiastic on any question, and has ideas with regard to that question, it would be a bold, courageous, and clever man who will stop the Lord Chancellor's way. Therefore I think you may look forward with some confidence to a satisfactory measure upon this important question being introduced in the House of Lords early next session.

Then there is the great question which overshadows all others, and which will absorb all the time and energies of the Government, and that is the establishment in our country districts of a genuinely popular form of local government. That is a question which we do not intend to trifle or to tamper with. It is the decided intention of the Government to take it up in earnest, and to endeavour to arrive at a settlement of it. It includes two very large questions indeed. It includes some comprehensive re-arrangement and re-adjustment of the incidence of local taxation, and it includes some provision by which personal property shall be brought into the area of local taxation, and shall be called upon to contribute a far more equal share than it does now in the expenses of local government. The question of local government also includes another very large and thorny question—it includes the licensing question. I will not now enter into the complexities of that matter, but I believe it is possible for your local bodies, if properly constituted, to settle most of the difficulties and most of the controversies which have arisen around the question of licensing. At any rate I think the time has come when, by an

agreement of all parties—except enthusiasts and fanatics—a real and genuine move forward can be made.

There is another point in which I am specially interested, which I cannot omit to notice. I am specially interested in it from the office which I have the honour to hold. "I will not conceal from you that my own special object, to which I hope to devote whatever energy and strength or influence I may possess, is to endeavour to attain some genuine and considerable reduction of public expenditure, and consequent reduction of taxation. I have not the time, nor have I yet the information, which would enable me to go further into this matter now; but I frankly confess that I shall be bitterly disappointed if it is not in my power after one year, or at any rate two years, to show to the public that a very honest and a very earnest effort has been made in that direction, and that that effort has been attended with practical and sensible results." I think you will all agree with me that with regard to the programme of legislation I have provided you with, it is a programme more than sufficient for one session of Parliament. Indeed, I think I have probably sketched out the work of two sessions of Parliament; because you must remember that in addition to all these matters you will probably have to consider in a practical manner further reforms of the land laws of Ireland. The land laws of Ireland were recently reformed in a hasty and impulsive manner. There are many imperfections in the land system of Ireland at present. The system of double ownership in Ireland is a system which cannot last long. The process of change from double to single ownership must somehow be accelerated if you wish to produce peace in Ireland. But, in addition to that, you will have to endeavour, in this Parliament at any rate, to lay the foundation of a system of popular local government in Ireland—a very large question to solve, very difficult on which to obtain the co-operation of different parties, but a question which no Government and no party can afford to shirk. In addition to that there is another question which will very shortly come up for consideration—a question affecting the agricultural community. I refer to the question of popular elementary education. That is now being examined into by

a Royal Commission, and until that Commission reports no Government can act. But when the report comes up, and when it has been considered and digested, you will find that legislation on popular elementary education is urgently demanded by very large masses of our people.

I have told you that the prospects of the Government are very fair, but I have also told you that the work which is before the Government is very heavy. It is so heavy that, if the prospects of the Government were not fair, that work would be almost appalling. But there are matters which are absolutely outside the range of legislation, which no Parliament, and which, to some extent, no Government, can touch. A nation does not live by legislation alone; there are other matters beyond the control of Parliament and of Government, and in that area of subjects which is outside the reach of Ministers or of parties I find one most cheering and encouraging fact, which I feel it my duty to bring to your notice. There are distinct and definite symptoms of a real revival of trade, and of commercial enterprise in this country. Now, if this revival is continued, you may depend upon it, it will very soon re-act upon the agricultural community and the agricultural interest, which is very dear to some here, because if we can once more restore some measure of prosperity and activity to our manufacturing towns, you will have almost immediately a great demand for, and a great consumption of, agricultural produce. If we can only get the town population to work in this country, you may depend upon it we shall soon have the rural districts busy and prosperous. This revival of trade is shown by many trustworthy signs. It is shown, in the first place, by great commercial activity in America. Our American friends are always ahead of everybody else, and what I hope is, that they may not, by their over-zeal and activity, spoil what promises to be a good future, and that they will not be led into over-speculation, which may produce panic and further depression. But the revival is also shown by the revenue returns. I prefer not to dwell upon those returns in detail at present, for to some extent they would be illusory, and my impression might be mistaken; but still the revenue returns do show signs of a revival of trade in this country;

and there is also this great fact, that the great merchants and the great warehouse proprietors of this country are now beginning to find that their accumulations of stocks of manufactured and of raw materials are becoming exhausted. Upon these accumulations they have traded for some years, and they have become exhausted, and their stocks require replenishing; and that being so, and nearly all being in the same position, they are running into the market to replenish their stocks, and consequently you have a healthy and natural rise in prices. It seems certain that there is a revival of trade going on—a revival which seems to be a real revival; and it would not be rash or premature to say that we have perhaps at last touched the bottom of this terrible and protracted commercial and agricultural depression under which we have been so many years labouring. But there is one thing which is necessary to a real revival of trade which is to endure and which is to increase. The people of this country must have a Government in which they have confidence. Confidence is necessary—absolutely vital—to all enterprise, agricultural or commercial. The people of this country must know that they have a Government which will preserve law and order. They must know that they have a Government which does not intend to be squeezed, which does not intend to be frightened by any passing or transitory clamour, or by the noise of faction. They must have a Government which will recall from their starry exile those laws of political economy which Mr. Gladstone so summarily banished. They must have a Government in office which will respect the rights of property and which has consideration for the sanctity of contract. For years in England you have had no such Government, and the absence of such a Government has aggravated the commercial depression. I do earnestly believe and hope that you have such a Government now; and if that belief of mine becomes at all general and at all popular, this revival of trade will progress speedily and merrily.

Now, you will be glad to hear that I am drawing near to the close of my remarks. There are on the political horizon—otherwise an horizon as fair almost as that which stretches before me this fine autumn afternoon--there are on the

political horizon two dark clouds, which may develop into storm and hurricane, which may shatter the brightest prospects, and destroy all the best and wisest calculations. I allude specially to the social condition of Ireland and to the aspect of foreign policy. In Ireland, I regret to say, you have the agitators hard at work, determined to leave that country no peace, no rest from political agitation. You have these agitators led by Mr. Gladstone and by Mr. Parnell, who, you may be certain, will stick at nothing, and will recoil from nothing which may make the government of the Queen impossible in Ireland. They have declared that it is not in the power of the British Government and the British Parliament to govern Ireland, and they will do all they know to make good their assertion. I believe their iniquitous, their unscrupulous projects will fail. I believe, and I hope, their plans will be utterly confounded; and I base my hopes and belief upon two or three good reasons, which I will give to you. In the first place, the difficulty of Ireland is mainly an agrarian and agricultural difficulty. Whatever evils the legislation of 1881 may have had, this much must be said for it, that under it the tenantry of Ireland gained enormous advantages. If Mr. Parnell were to lose the support of the tenantry of Ireland, or if they became lukewarm in his support, or refused to go in for acute agrarian disorder, the power of Mr. Parnell would rapidly fade away. Now mark what the advantages are which the tenantry of Ireland obtained under the Land Act of 1881. Every farmer in Ireland, with the exception of the leaseholder, could get his rent fixed before a court of law upon a scale of prices, and obtain what is denominated a fair rent. That generally turns out to be a reduction of rent by about 25 per cent. He also gets fixity of tenure, which means a renewable lease of fifteen years, during which he cannot be disturbed by his landlord; and, moreover, he gets the right to sell to any one to whom he will, for the highest price he can get, the interest in this lease. You who are acquainted with agricultural matters know that these are enormous advantages, and that they represent a definite and considerable money value; and I do not think that the farmers of Ireland are so foolish or so shortsighted as to risk the loss of these great pecuniary advantages,

as they would undoubtedly do if they indulged to any large extent in acute agrarian disorder. There is a second reason why I do not think Mr. Parnell's efforts will succeed. They have this year an abundant harvest in Ireland. They have had in Ireland every year since 1880 a bountiful and prosperous harvest, which is more than we can say in England. And they have consequently plenty of produce in Ireland, and the quantity of the produce of the land to a certain extent counterbalances the low prices which it fetches. The prices are now recovering, and I learn, on authority, that the price of butter and young stock has made a sensible rise within the last few weeks in Ireland. That is another reason why, I think, there ought not to be any great agrarian disorder in Ireland. My third reason is that I have confidence in the moderation of the Irish landlords. I do not believe that the Irish landlords are so foolish as to play into the hands of Mr. Parnell. I believe all the assertions of Mr. Parnell and his followers that there will be wholesale and unjust evictions in Ireland, are utterly unfounded and untrue. I believe that the landlords of Ireland are disposed to exercise their rights—the little rights which your Parliament has left them—with all justice and moderation; and you must receive with the greatest caution the statements of the Irish party as to the cruelty of the Irish landlords. Of course, if Mr. Parnell is successful, as he and his party hope to be, in organising a general repudiation of rent all over Ireland, there naturally will be a struggle. But, after all, that is human nature; and if one party chooses to deny and repudiate the legal rights of another, the other party is really justified in endeavouring to show that those legal rights are supported and will be given effect to by the law of the land. But if during the winter in Ireland we are not confronted by any no-rent manifesto, if we are not confronted by any general no-rent movement, then I am as certain as that I am standing before you that the landlords of Ireland will by no action of theirs provoke the anger of their tenantry, and will not have recourse to harsh or unjust evictions, and will not, in the great majority of cases, endeavour to exact rents which, from one cause or another, it may be impossible to pay. For all



those reasons I am of opinion that Mr. Parnell's programme will probably fail—I hope it will. And I have great hopes of the immediate future in Ireland. I think that the Irish people know that they have a Government in power who are absolutely determined at all costs and in spite of any danger—political or otherwise—to preserve law, to maintain the law, to assert the rights of property, and to preserve order. From that duty on no consideration whatever will we be made to shrink. No longer will we tolerate that the state of Ireland shall continue to be a disgrace to England, and a blot upon the fair fame and character of the British Empire. Law and order must be made to prevail in Ireland; but the Irish people are very quick and very shrewd. They know when a Government is in earnest; and my belief is that, directly or indirectly, large classes and large bodies of the Irish people will co-operate with the Government in their endeavours to restore order in Ireland, and therefore, although I go back to my original proposition and state that the prospect in Ireland is gloomy and menacing to some extent, yet I have great hopes for the future, and I do see real and clear signs of daylight, which may lead one to expect a better and brighter future in Ireland.

Of the state of foreign affairs I regret I am not able to speak to you with such confidence. Far more serious perhaps than any other matter is the state of things which has arisen in Bulgaria. In the autumn of last year, when Lord Salisbury was at the Foreign Office, we had every reason to hope that the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria under the sovereignty of Prince Alexander would develop a prosperous and independent nation, in the growing strength of which might ultimately be found a peaceful and true solution of the Eastern question. Those hopes have been for the moment to a great extent dashed. A brutal and cowardly conspiracy, consummated before the young community had had time to consolidate itself, was successful in this, that it paralysed the governing authority of the Prince and deprived Bulgaria of an honoured and trusted leader.<sup>1</sup> At the present moment the freedom and independence of Bulgaria,

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the 'kidnapping' and subsequent abdication of Prince Alexander, King of Bulgaria.

as well as of the kingdoms of Servia and Roumania, would appear to be seriously compromised. This grave question is undoubtedly attracting much public attention in this country. It has been said by some, and even by persons of authority and influence, that in the issues which are involved England has no material interest. Such an assertion would appear to me to be far too loose and general. The sympathy of England with liberty, and with the freedom and independence of communities and nationalities, is of ancient origin, and has become the traditional direction of our foreign policy. The policy based on this strong sympathy is not so purely sentimental as a careless critic might suppose. It would be more correct, indeed, to describe such a policy as particular, and, in a sense, as selfish, for the precious liberties which we enjoy, and the freedom of Europe from tyranny and despotism, are in reality indissolubly connected. To England Europe owes much of her modern popular freedom. It was mainly English effort which rescued Germany and the Netherlands from the despotism of King Philip of Spain, and after him from that of Louis XIV. of France. It was English effort which preserved the liberties of Europe from the desolating tyranny of Napoleon. In our own times, our nation has done much, either by direct intervention or by energetic moral support, to establish upon firm foundations the freedom of Italy and of Greece. The policy of Lord Beaconsfield in 1878, so much misrepresented, so much misunderstood, had this for its most conspicuous characteristic, that it rescued the young liberties of the peoples in the Balkan Peninsula, who, having been saved from the frying-pan of Turkish misrule, were in danger of falling into the fire of Russian autocracy. Times and circumstances alter, and the particular policy which may be suitable for one set of circumstances may require to be modified as those circumstances change. A generation ago Germany and Austria were not so sensitive as they are now to the value of political liberty. Nor did they appreciate to its full extent the great stability of institutions which political liberty engenders; and on England devolved the duty—the honourable but dangerous duty—of setting an example and of leading the way. Those were the days of Lord Palmerston; but times have changed,

and it is evident, from the speech of the Hungarian Prime Minister on Thursday, that the freedom and the independence of the Danubian Principalities and of the Balkan nationalities are a primary and vital object in the policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those things being so, it may well be that England can honourably and safely afford to view with satisfaction that Power whose interests are most directly and vitally concerned assuming the foremost part in this great international work. We must, of course, take it for granted, as I am doing, that the liberty-giving policy of the Treaty of Berlin will be carefully and watchfully protected. Whatever modification this great fact may enable us to make in our foreign policy, whatever diminution of isolated risk or sole responsibility this may enable us to effect, you may be certain of one thing—that there will be no sudden or violent departure by her Majesty's present Government from those main principles of foreign policy which I have before alluded to, and which for nearly three centuries mark in strong, distinct, and clear lines the course of the British Empire among the nations of the world. There are Powers in Europe who earnestly and honestly desire to avoid war and to preserve peace, to content themselves with their possessions and their frontiers, and to concentrate their energies on commercial progress and on domestic development. There are other Powers who do not appear to be so fortunately situated, and who, from one cause or another which it is not necessary to analyse or examine, betray from time to time a regrettable tendency towards contentious and even aggressive action. It is the duty of any British Government to exhaust itself in efforts to maintain the best and the most friendly relations with all foreign States, and to lose no opportunity of offering friendly and conciliatory counsels for the purpose of mitigating national rivalries and of peacefully solving international disputes. But should circumstances arise which, from their grave and dangerous nature, should force the Government of the Queen to make a choice, it cannot be doubted that the sympathy and, if necessary, even the support, of England will be given to those Powers who seek the peace of Europe and the liberty of peoples, and in whose favour our timely adhesion would probably, and without

the use of force, decide the issue. Our policy in these anxious times—subject always to the cardinal principle of maintaining the union of the Unionist party—will be to pursue an even and steady course, avoiding the dangers of officious interference and unnecessary initiative on the one hand, and an attitude of selfish and timid isolation on the other. And I earnestly hope that we may be successful in contributing to the preservation of that general peace and security which, however necessary and advantageous it may be for other nations, is absolutely essential to the progress and prosperity of the British Empire.

## THE NEW CONSERVATIVE POLICY.

BRADFORD, OCTOBER 26, 1886.

[The following speech was delivered to a large gathering of representatives of Conservative local organisations, who came from all parts of the country. It was estimated that fully a million and a half of electors were represented at this meeting.]

A QUIET autumn has certain disadvantages for unfortunate people who, like myself, are called upon to address great political meetings. It has this disadvantage, that it is very difficult to find any succession of subjects which can from their nature arouse for any length of time the attention of so great an audience as the present. I may say that I very much regret having made that speech which I made at Dartford. That was only three weeks ago, and yet I wish I had not made it, because, if I had not made that speech at Dartford three weeks ago, I might have made that speech here to-night.<sup>1</sup> My task this evening would consequently have been much lighter and much easier. However, risking the chance of wearying you, and risking the chance of travelling over subjects which are no doubt to some extent familiar to you, I may find one or two others which may possibly be of interest, and to which I should like to direct your attention this evening. I would first advert to the condition of Ireland, a country which has for the last six years been the source of the most intense anxiety to your statesmen and to your fellow-countrymen. On the whole, about Ireland I can allow myself to say this much, that the accounts which the Ministers

<sup>1</sup> An allusion was here made to the attacks upon the Dartford speech which were kept up by the semi-official Conservative press, and to the denunciation of a policy which afterwards was adopted by the entire Tory party. The declaration by Lord Randolph of his desire to repeat the 'Dartford programme' was received with much laughter and cheering by the meeting:

receive, the official information as to the social condition of the country and as to the prospects of a restoration of tranquillity, are encouraging. There is nothing whatever discouraging about them. There has been in Ireland a good and abundant harvest, and that harvest has been well gathered in. There has been in Ireland, moreover, a marked and satisfactory recovery of prices; and we can learn, though of course exact and accurate information on this subject is difficult to obtain, that the rents are being fairly paid all over the country. That great source of disturbance, the non-payment of rent, does not seem to be in active operation in Ireland at the present moment. But there is this to be said, that large reductions have been made, very large and general and liberal reductions of rent have been made, by the Irish landlords. The Irish landlords have, I think, a great claim upon your consideration and your sympathy. They are not a body which have met with very much justice from public opinion in England of late years. If ever there was a body which was entitled to stand upon their strict legal rights to the letter of the law, I say these Irish landlords were. The Irish landlords have justified the confidence which her Majesty's Government placed in them. They have shown themselves to be considerate and liberal, and equal to the present crisis. The Irish landlords, by the general spirit of liberality and consideration with which they have treated the Irish tenantry, have co-operated in a signal and a marked manner towards the great object of restoring order and tranquillity in Ireland. There are, undoubtedly, a few districts in Ireland where the disease of social disorder still lingers, where the emissaries of outrage and assassination have fixed a tight grasp upon the people, and where defiance of law seems to threaten to die hard. It is possible that these districts may have to be specially treated. There still remains in certain districts in Ireland—not, I am happy to say, a wide area, and I hope it is a diminishing area—a considerable amount of terror, of disorder, and of crime; and it is possible that Parliament may have to give special consideration and special treatment to those districts. But, on the whole, with this exception, I may say that there has been a marked decrease of crime and outrage in Ireland, and

that the returns of crime for the last month are lower than they have been, I believe, for the last five years. We are aware, of course, that it is too soon to speak about the state of Ireland with confidence. We have been only, I think, altogether three months in office, and absolute confidence as regards the future of Ireland would be out of place. No doubt Ministers will soon assemble in council in London for the annual winter deliberations of the Government, and the state of Ireland will naturally be fully and closely considered—considered with all that valuable information which the knowledge and experience and judgment of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach<sup>1</sup> can supply. The country will very shortly know whether the Government will think themselves justified in allowing the winter to pass without having special recourse to Parliament for measures with which to assist the execution of the law. That is a matter on which I cannot at present speak to you with absolute certainty. We must recollect, you must recollect, that the present Government are under very heavy and under very binding pledges—pledges to Parliament, and pledges to you, the people—to maintain decent order and security of life and property in Ireland. Those pledges were given very deliberately, and they were not the mere words and phrases in which the former Government used to be so fond of indulging. No! Those pledges when they were given indicated on the part of the Government a settled determination and resolution from which nothing that we know of is capable of turning us aside. No single soul in this country would ever place confidence in us again, nor shall we expect to receive from any single soul in this country a particle of confidence again, if those pledges which we have given to the country in regard to the maintenance of order in Ireland were not fully carried out. However, having said that, I add this: that I know of nothing at the present moment to indicate that the Government are not able to do their duty in Ireland, and that they are not doing their duty. On the contrary, all indications would go the other way, and really, my lords and gentlemen, when you come to consider through what a terrible time of trial that unfortunate country has

<sup>1</sup> Then Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant.

passed during the past five years, I think you will agree that the state of the country is on the whole not nearly so bad as one might reasonably expect it to be. There is little doubt of this, that the Irish people either have altogether appreciated or are rapidly appreciating the full significance of the result of the last general election, when the stern resolution of England shivered and shattered into fragments that movement for the Repeal of the Union that emanated from Ireland—a movement, moreover, which was supported by a great majority of the Liberal party, and which was led by, perhaps, the most powerful politician of modern days. That movement was shivered, and shattered into fragments, by the stern decision of England. It is hardly probable that the same project will ever be attempted again under circumstances so exceptionally favourable to its success, and I think the Irish are too clever, too shrewd, too intelligent, and too quick not to have appreciated at their full value those great and glaring facts which are demonstrated by the last election; and we may reasonably hope that the Irish people, either as a community or as individuals, will gradually and without much delay shape their political and social action in accordance with the result of that election. If the Unionists as a party hold together—and I do not see why they should not hold together—if they would take proper precaution for the future, and if they will follow up the victory which they have gained, boldly and energetically, then I think we may come to the conclusion without much doubt or hesitation that the question of the maintenance or the repeal of the Union has been settled in our time for one and probably two generations.

I now ask you to examine with me a moment the condition of our political opponents. What is that condition, looking at it now fairly and without prejudice? I think it is a very unhealthy condition. It is, indeed, so bad a condition that I am inclined to ask, have we any political opponents? There is no doubt that our political opponents are very sick. They would appear to me to be sick unto death. So sick are they I hardly believe that they can possibly recover from their sickness, and I will tell you why: because they have got into such a terrible and hopeless state of nervous prostration that they can do nothing else except con-



template, examine, and moan over their various maladies and diseases. Most of them, certainly the most prominent of them, are keeping tolerably quiet, and no doubt that is the very best thing they can do, for any physician will tell you that perfect and absolute quiet and repose is the only cure for an exhausted and diseased organism. Their renowned leader is apparently occupied—to judge from the reports which appear in the newspapers—in that reckless and ruthless devastation of the groves and plantations of his paternal acres which so clearly proves to the world that he holds those acres—to use the legal title—without impeachment of waste, and also he finds time to study the history of the Union, to study it closely, and to re-examine it from every point of view. From all I can learn at the present moment, he is unable to decide positively which was the greatest scoundrel or blackguard, Mr. Pitt or Lord Castlereagh, and no doubt from time to time he will make to the public announcements on that question. But, meanwhile, you will agree with me that we have not the smallest right or title to complain of his being engaged in that occupation. It is a perfectly innocent occupation. It cannot possibly do the smallest harm to anybody, least of all to Mr. Pitt or to Lord Castlereagh. Only one Liberal politician of any eminence has thought proper to address the British public—Lord Rosebery—the man whom Mr. Gladstone once designated, in a burst of enthusiasm, as the man of the future—a very dim and distant future, I fear. I read Lord Rosebery's speech because it was my duty to do so, and I found that Lord Rosebery, in that speech, was entirely occupied with a kind of morbid analysis of the shrunken and attenuated form of the once great Liberal party after a long course of Gladstonism. Lord Rosebery mournfully ejaculated: 'We were once 350 in the House of Commons; now we are only 180. Once we were supported by over two millions of voters out of an electorate of only three millions and a half; now we are not supported by more than one million two hundred thousand voters out of an electorate of over five millions.' And so he went on, and that was the burden of his song. He had nothing to suggest; he had nothing whatever to criticise in the policy of his opponents, and he had nothing whatever to announce except that he, the man

of the future, was going off on a long voyage to India, and that he sincerely hoped, though he did not much believe, that he should find things a little better when he came back. I have given you in fairly correct, though, no doubt, in condensed form, a review of the position of the Government and the Unionist party and of their opponents. But you would be making a great error if you thought that, because of and on account of that position, which is in many respects, an encouraging and exhilarating position—if you thought that the present Government were in the least bit carried away by the success which has been vouchsafed to them, or were in the least bit intoxicated with the victory which they have gained. On the contrary, all this success and all these advantages, which for the time surround the Government and the Unionist party, only serve to stimulate the Government to fresh exertions, and, in one sense, to determine them to do all which it may be in their power to do so that the country may derive the utmost benefit and advantage from the present political situation. We have placed before the country, and, I think you will say, we have lost no time in placing before the country, a programme both for domestic and foreign affairs; and as far as I can learn—and I have many means of obtaining accurate information—the great mass of opinion in the country is fairly well satisfied with that programme and only desires one thing more, which is that the programme should become an accomplished reality. I think it is likely to become so, for all the opposition we are likely to meet with, the effective opposition, the constitutional opposition from the Gladstonian Separatists. All they can do apparently is to toss and writhe on their bed of sickness and pain, and to exclaim with impotent rage, ‘How unfair! how shameful! how unprincipled! you have stolen our programme.’ These ejaculations which they are making every day are, to my mind, the most glaring proofs of their hopelessly diseased mental condition. Why ‘their programme’ I should like to know? Since 1880 they have been in office with a short interval, and they did not make an attempt to carry out a single item of that programme, excepting in one direction. They did attempt to reform Parliamentary procedure, and they made such a mess of it that the

whole work has to be done over again. I never knew a claim, and I have never read of a claim put forward by a political party, which was at once more audacious or more ridiculous. They tell us that our programme, such as I sketched at Dartford the other day, is a Radical programme, that the Tory party have turned their coats and abandoned their principles, and adopted the principles of the Radical party, and quantities of sentences of that kind and of equal stupidity. All I know about the programme of policy, foreign and domestic, which I endeavoured to sketch out at Dartford three weeks ago is this, that it was a mere repetition of the programme which was sketched out by Lord Salisbury in November last, in that speech which he made at Newport in 1885. All I know about my speech at Dartford which I can say in reply to what I am told as to its being a total adoption of Radical principles and measures is this, that it was a mere reiteration and elaboration of the Queen's Speech of January last when Lord Salisbury's first Government was in office. It was an elaboration and a reiteration of the speeches of the Ministers who supported the policy which was contained in that speech. At that time it was our intention, if we had remained in office, to have invited Parliament to consider practically the question of the reform of Parliamentary procedure, and that we meant to ask Parliament to do first. At that time it was the intention of the Government to have dealt with the interesting question of providing facilities for the acquisition of allotments for agricultural labourers, and the only difference between then and now is this, that the Government at that time thought they would do better to embody that question in the Local Government Bill, and the Government now are of opinion that they will do better to deal with it in a separate and special measure. At that time it was the intention of the Government to introduce a measure to facilitate the sale of glebe land in connection with the question of the provision of allotments for agricultural labourers. At that time my noble friend the Lord Chancellor had in preparation a measure to provide for the cheaper transfer of land, and for the registration and simplification of title to real estate. At that time the Government had been for long considering and had made great progress with a measure

for the establishment of popular local government in our rural districts. That measure would have been of a comprehensive character, and would have included proposals for dealing with local taxation and the question of licensing. In addition to that, my right honourable friend the present Colonial Secretary was then President of the Board of Trade, and he had under his most careful consideration a measure for the further regulation of railway rates. Therefore nothing whatever has been added to the programme which we put before the country in November last and January last, and I never heard a single soul say in November last, or January last, that we had adopted a Radical programme. I was wrong in saying nothing had been added. Two things have been added. One added question is that we hope to be able to legislate with a view to settle the difficulty which has arisen about the payment of tithes, and another addition to the programme has been this, that with regard to procedure in the House of Commons we have come to the conclusion that there must be some further power adopted by Parliament for closing debate. That is an addition on which I shall have to say something before I sit down. But, except those two additions, our programme has been the same since November last, and our programme in November last, as it was placed before the country by Lord Salisbury, merely summarised what every sincere Conservative speaker of any position or intelligence has been explaining to the country for the past six years. This programme has practically been before the electors for six years, and it is because it has been before the electors for six years, and because the electors now believe it is our programme, and a genuine programme, that we are in office at the present moment.

You are aware that last January we were prevented from even making a beginning of carrying out that programme. Mr. Gladstone, by a manœuvre, perhaps the most artful, certainly the most unprincipled ever adopted by any Minister, solely with the view of placing himself in office, turned us out of power. We had to resign, and we were prevented from then making a beginning of that programme, though I believe at that time the general public feeling of the country was very

much in favour of our being allowed to make a beginning. However, we were turned out, and Mr. Gladstone came in. And now Mr. Gladstone has been turned out, and we are going to try again, and this time I think we are going to try with every prospect of success. It is the fact that we have every prospect of success which makes our opponents so malevolent. They know they cannot prevent us now from making an earnest and honest attempt to carry out our intentions. They know that, whatever manœuvres they adopt, however artful or however unprincipled they may be, it is out of their power to turn us out of office, and it is that which so excites their malice. It is their impotence that drives them to fury. The consequence is, they have nothing to do now except to misrepresent our policy, and to ascribe to us the most injurious and the most libellous and the most calumnious motives. Now there are many forms of calumny which the Radical Separatists adopt against the present Government. They are very fond of saying, in the first place: 'The Government have produced a great programme, but they have not the smallest intention of attempting to carry it out. The Conservatives always like to do nothing. Their idea is that there should be no legislation, and you will see nothing will be done.' That is one form of calumny they adopt, and to that I can only reply, 'Wait and see; time alone can decide whether they are right or wrong.' But of this I am certain, that even if we did produce our programme in a practical form, and make an effort to carry it out, Radical Separatists would at once say it was owing to them that we had been forced to take that step. Another form of calumny is this—they say: 'Oh yes; very likely the Government will produce some measures, but these measures will not be measures of real reform.' Again to that I can only reply, 'Let us wait and see.' Time, again, is the only power that can decide that question. But of this I am perfectly certain, that if we did provide really good reforming measures, and carry them into law, Radical Separatists would at once claim that it was entirely owing to their influence and cleverness that these measures were carried. There is no pleasing these malevolent persons. There is one special calumny, which I should like to deal with

to-night. It is freely made. The Radicals go about saying that the Tory party has been converted in the most unprincipled manner to the policy of three acres and a cow. The accusation is perfectly false. We, the members of the Tory party, are, I believe—certainly, I can speak for myself with great assurance—as opposed as ever we were to the policy of mortgaging the local rates in order to provide every agricultural labourer in the country with three acres and a cow. We are opposed to the policy because we think it an unsafe, an impracticable, an imprudent, and an unrealisable policy. This however is certain, that what I may call the facilitating by legislation, so far as legislation can facilitate such an object—the facilitating of the multiplication of owners and occupiers of land—has long been a cardinal principle of Tory policy not only in Ireland, but over the whole of Great Britain. On that basis we shall work, and of this I feel no doubt whatever—that, with regard either to the allotments question, or with regard to the much larger question of land transfer and simplification of title of real estate, we shall produce to Parliament measures which will be real improvements and needed improvements on the existing state of things.

With regard to the question of local government in Ireland, I will permit myself to say this, that there are three things certain. It may be as well that I should state them. In the first place, the present Government do not intend, in any shape or form, to grant Home Rule to Ireland, nor to become responsible for any legislation that contains the germs of Home Rule. The second thing, which is also certain, is this, that we do intend, if we remain in office, to deal with the question of local government in Ireland. And the third thing that is certain is, that we do not mean to be hurried or hasty in that dealing. We mean to be most extremely deliberate in our consideration of what is a most difficult and complicated subject. But this much I may say, that the proposals of the Government for dealing with the local government of Ireland, when they are produced to Parliament, will be found to be based and drawn upon lines similar to and analogous to those upon which we hope to build up the system of popular local government in Great Britain. These three things are, I believe,

certain and immutable. But I am perfectly sure the Radical Separatists, by their speeches and through their press, will recommence to state that they know as a positive fact that the Government have in preparation a measure of Home Rule for Ireland.

There is one matter to which I wish to ask your special attention. It is a matter which has already excited, I am glad to say, much public comment and attention. I allude to the question of reform of Parliamentary procedure. I made some allusion to this in my speech at Dartford, and there I stated that, in my opinion, the main feature—or, to borrow a very good phrase from Mr. Gladstone, the motor muscle—of any scheme of reform of Parliamentary procedure must contain as its first article the adoption by the House of Commons of a simple and effective form of closing debate, according to the will of a majority. Without this all the other reforms of your Parliamentary procedure will be absolutely useless and unprofitable. With it there are many other wide reforms, which may be in the highest degree beneficial to the transaction of public business; but the motor muscle, the power of closing debate, is the foundation, not only of any reform of procedure, but it is the essential and vital principle of any programme of practical legislation for the wants of the people of this country. It is more than that—it is the foundation of any hope or prospect of good executive and administrative government under Parliamentary institutions. Without it, I believe that all hope of legislative progress is vain; without it, your Parliamentary institutions will gradually become weakened, impaired, ultimately destroyed; without it, the gravest possible dangers will certainly arise, if the Government in any time of great emergency had to make sudden and unexpected demands on Parliament. Of course on this point at once an accusation is brought against those members of the Tory party who advocate such a change as this that they have changed their minds; and that accusation is specially brought against myself, and I am told that I have changed my mind, and, of course, that I have changed it in a very unprincipled manner. That follows naturally. Well, I might argue that question,

particularly if I possessed anything like the dialectical ingenuity of Mr. Gladstone, *ad infinitum*; but I think it perfectly useless to argue it and to waste the time of this meeting. I frankly and fully admit that I have changed my mind upon this question of the power of closing debate. An unchanging mind is an admirable possession so long as the circumstances with regard to which that mind is made up do not themselves change. But an unchanging mind, when the circumstances on which that mind was made up are totally changed and transformed—that is a possession which I sincerely hope will never be mine. Allow yourselves to look with me at the total change of circumstances which has arisen with regard to Parliament since the Conservative party as a party opposed the power of closing debate. Compare that Parliament of 1880 when Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister, with the Parliament of the present day when Lord Salisbury is Prime Minister. You will see there have been four great changes, of which the last is the most important. When Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister both of the great parties in the State were solidly united against Repeal, nor did it appear possible or probable that that union could ever in our time pass away or be destroyed. Further, both political parties in the State were united for the purpose of suppressing wilful, general, and deliberate obstruction of public business. That was marvellously exemplified when, in the year 1881, Parliament in one night, and hardly with any debate at all, agreed to Mr. Gladstone's rules of urgency with regard to public business. But more than that. In the Parliament of 1880 both political parties were united in an unchangeable determination to support and to strengthen the authority of the Chair. And now comes the principal feature of that Parliament, comparing it with the present. In that Parliament of 1880 Mr. Parnell's followers only numbered, for effective purposes of obstruction, some twenty or twenty-five votes. Under these circumstances, undoubtedly, the Conservative party opposed the introduction of what was called the *clôture* as a startling and unnecessary innovation. That is so. I do not deny it. Those were the circumstances. The Conservatives may have been right or they may have been wrong;



with that we have nothing to do. What we have to do with is the change that has come over the state of affairs. What have you now? You have the most tremendous change! It is not change: it is absolute transformation of political circumstances. Instead of the two parties being united against the Repeal of the Union, the project of Repeal has been embraced and advocated by a great majority of the Liberal party. They have embraced it, and they advocate the policy of repeal passionately, violently, desperately, and they are prepared to go to any length to attain their end. Instead of the two great parties in the State being united for the purpose of putting down wilful and deliberate obstruction, the great proportion of the Radical Separatists not only tolerate wilful and deliberate obstruction and countenance it, but many of them take part in it, and some of them lead it. The two great parties are no longer united in support of, and to strengthen the authority of the Chair—so far from that, the Chair can look for no support whatever from the Radical Separatists or from their leaders. I come to the greatest change of all. Mr. Parnell's party, which in the Parliament of 1880 only numbered some twenty or twenty-five, now numbers eighty to eighty-three or eighty-four votes. Eighty-three or eighty-four votes for effective purposes of general, wilful, and deliberate obstruction of all public business. That is the great change, the greatest change of all, added on to the other changes; and Mr. Parnell has given you fair notice in a speech in Dublin, which was received with enthusiasm by the party which he leads, that it is their avowed determination, and that they have it in their power, to render all legislation and all transaction of public business impossible until you have granted them the Irish Parliament which they claim. That is the state of affairs. Those are the circumstances; and I feel certain that a very large body of persons in this country have changed their minds about the *clôture*. These features of your Parliament at the present are dangers to the State of momentous importance. In your Parliament—the fortress of your liberties, the citadel of all your privileges and all your rights—you have a band of determined enemies, some two hundred strong, who are determined, unless they attain their object, to

destroy that Parliament, to degrade the authority and to paralyse the efficiency of that House of Commons which during eight centuries has moulded your national life and guided your imperial career. Not only have they avowed their intention of doing this, but they have already begun to put it into practice, and they have already shown their power. I wish you could read, all of you, a most admirable article in the 'Quarterly Review' of this last October, which gives a graphic and truthful delineation of the scenes which took place in the House of Commons in that short session which is just over—scenes which never could be reported accurately in the public press. I sat through that session steadily. I watched carefully every event—small and great—of that session, and as the mask fell from the Irish countenances at times, and as the Radical Separatists, recklessly sometimes, disclosed their real intentions, I confess that, with respect to this closing of debate the scales fell entirely from my eyes, and all doubt on the subject was for ever removed from my mind.

What I have to ask you is this. You who have sustained a tremendous struggle, and sustained that struggle victoriously hitherto, upon you reposes the guardianship and the custody of every institution which Englishmen have been accustomed to hold dear. If you fail, if you are beaten, if you are dissipated, then all those institutions will rapidly go. What I want to know is this. Are you, who have fought the battle of the Union victoriously so far—are you going to recoil from measures which are absolutely essential if you would carry that battle to a successful issue, and if you would wish your posterity to reap the fruits of your labour and of your endurance? Speaking broadly, my lords and gentlemen, this is the issue which is before you. There are the proverbial three courses. You can, in the first place, by your attitude encourage the House of Commons to reform procedure in such a manner as shall give to the House of Commons the power of closing debate at the will of a majority. Or there is a second course. You can by your attitude encourage the House of Commons to do no business, to pass no legislation, to have constant disorderly scenes in their midst, and to have repeated conflicts with the Chair

and discreditable wrangles of every sort and kind. That is the second course which you can encourage the House of Commons to take. And there is a third course. You can grant Home Rule, and repeal the Union right away. You say 'Never'; but you are bound under the present circumstances to look facts in the face; you must not, if you would act patriotically, if you would act fairly by your country, you must not blind your eyes to glaring facts simply because those facts are disagreeable to think of, and because they involve measures which from some points of view you dislike. You must choose, and you cannot help choosing, between those three courses I have pointed out to you. Pray remember this, that the second course of doing nothing, of passing no legislation, and of allowing your House of Commons to be degraded, must inevitably lead to the third course—namely, the repeal of the Union. I say this without fear of reproach, and without fear of exciting your displeasure. If your representatives in Parliament are not courageous enough to adopt this policy of taking measures for strengthening the House of Commons and for putting down obstruction in the House of Commons—if you are not courageous enough for that, then you are not courageous enough to sustain a successful fight against Repeal. Believe me, it is only by a simple and effective form of closing debates in the House of Commons, according to the will of a majority, that Parliament can regain its lost efficiency; it is only in that way that the character of Parliament, so much fallen and so much lost, can be restored; and if you shrink from the measures which are necessary—and I am not surprised that many ingenious arguments should be advanced against such proposals—if you are persuaded by those arguments, remember you have to deal with enemies who will shrink from nothing, who are absolutely unscrupulous, who are absolutely unprincipled, and who hope and who intend, if they can, by the utter smash-up of all your Parliamentary arrangements, to extort from a disheartened, from a disappointed, from a wearied, and from a sickened people that independent Irish Parliament which is the summit of their ambition, and which, owing to your action up to now, they have failed to obtain. It is my

business, it is my duty, to point out these facts to you—to point out to you the dangers which lie ahead, and the nature of the struggle you have still to undergo, and the means whereby those dangers may be averted, and that struggle successfully terminated. More than that I cannot do. The decision of questions like this lies first with your representatives in Parliament and afterwards with you. I have done my duty when I have placed the matter fairly, accurately, and fully before you, and told you of the measures which, in the opinion of the Government, it is absolutely necessary to adopt. I feel so seriously on this question, that I will not hesitate to run the risk of the reproach of arrogance and conceit in reminding you—who are at any rate a patient and indulgent audience—that it has already been my lot, it has been granted to me through what has been only a short political career, to judge more than once rightly on political questions as regards their import and their nature, and it is in the confidence—confidence which I feel partly owing to your kind reception of me this evening and partly to other causes—that I can, without arousing your displeasure, make that claim. I implore you to face this great question, this question of Parliamentary procedure—the state of your Parliament—to face it fully and frankly, to deal with it without timidity and without doubt. Deal with it now, when, so to speak, you are, from a Parliamentary and political point of view, young; deal with it while the golden moments of youth remain to you, while you are strong, while you are flushed with memories of victory, while inspired and confident with hopes for the future; deal with it while circumstances are favourable to you; deal with it while your judgment is sound, while your powers of decision remain unimpaired. Do not allow yourselves to postpone this question. Do not allow yourselves to be put off with half-measures and temporary expedients such as are sure to be suggested by timid minds, but such as you know or ought to know in your hearts will fail, and such as I tell you must fail, to attain their purpose. If you postpone the question, the result of such procrastinating conduct will be that when you have been weakened by constant failure, when you have been distracted by reiterated defeat,

when the time for a general election again draws nigh, and when the country has seen that all your promises or most of them have been unredeemed, then I tell you you will ask, and you will ask in vain, and you will ask too late, for those real and proper remedies which you ought to have adopted earlier and before. We, the Government, shall not be liable in this matter, I think, to any reproach or responsibility as far as we are concerned. We have placed before the country a practical, a genuine, and an honest programme of policy, both for domestic and foreign affairs, and we have indicated to you clearly and frankly and faithfully the preliminary measures we consider indispensable if that programme is to be hopefully taken in hand or successfully carried out. There is nothing in that programme which could alienate or even alarm any reasonable or moderate man. It is my unalterable conviction that if the supporters of the present Government—not only those who support them from ties of party, but those who give them an independent support—if they are able to display the great qualities of decision, courage, and united purpose—qualities without which this difficult crisis cannot be safely traversed—then I say it is my conviction that there are many long years in store—for Great Britain and for Ireland—of peace, progress, and prosperity.

RESIGNATION AS CHANCELLOR OF THE  
EXCHEQUER.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JANUARY 27, 1887.

[The most important of the circumstances attending the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill are dealt with in the introduction to this work. It is only necessary to explain here that the resignation was announced on December 23, 1886, and that on the 31st Lord Hartington had a prolonged interview with Lord Salisbury, the result of which was that, while Lord Hartington himself declined to join the Ministry, he recommended Mr. Goschen to do so. On January 3, Mr. Goschen accepted the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the distinct understanding that 'he had not become a Conservative' (*Times*, January 4, 1887). It was, however, found absolutely necessary for the Conservative party to procure a seat for Mr. Goschen. Earl Percy therefore retired from the representation of St. George's, Hanover Square—the safest Tory constituency in all London—and Mr. Goschen was returned.]

MR. SPEAKER, when a member of this House who has held office in the Administration has been compelled to resign that office, the House of Commons usually permits and expects some explanation of the reasons and causes of that act. If it should be the good pleasure of the House to-night to receive such an explanation, I am informed by Lord Salisbury that I am possessed of the gracious permission of the Sovereign to place before the House certain facts bearing on my resignation of the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Speaker, I resigned that office on the 20th of December last, because I was altogether unable to become responsible for the estimates which were presented by the departments for the support of the army and the navy in the coming year. Of course, sir, it would be idle to deny what has, I fancy, become fairly well known—that there were

other matters of grave importance on which it was my misfortune to hold opinions differing from those of Lord Salisbury. Those were matters, in my opinion, perfectly susceptible of accommodation; but this question of the estimates, on which I resigned, was incapable of such accommodation, for the reason, Sir, that I was deeply and repeatedly pledged by many a speech which I had made in various parts of the country to a policy of retrenchment and economy; because I was convinced from what I had learnt at the Treasury that such a policy was not only necessary but perfectly feasible; and because, viewing those pledges, it was impossible for me usefully to retain the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer in a Government in whose policy effective retrenchment found no place. It is not my intention to analyse in any degree the expenditure of this country at the present moment, and indeed it is my desire to make my remarks on this occasion as brief and as concise as they possibly can be; because, in the first place, the patience of the House has limits, and, in the second place, if I were to try to make an explanation of an over-elaborate character, such an explanation might tend to degenerate into a kind of indictment of the Government which I think, on the whole, would be neither useful nor becoming. But I may state this fact—that the amount of the estimates which were presented to me by the two departments as Chancellor of Exchequer exceeded 31,000,000*l.* for the coming year for the support of the army and navy; and there is another fact which I must mention, because it influenced me very materially. I had also to give my consent, and I did give my consent, although a reluctant one, to unusually large supplementary estimates for those two services. Before I left the Government I consented that there should be presented to Parliament supplementary estimates amounting to 300,000*l.* for the navy, close upon half a million for the army, and another half a million for expenses connected with the army in Egypt; and I thought that those unusually large supplementary estimates formed an additional and grave reason for the reduction of the naval and military expenditure in the coming year. I wish to put briefly before the House my view of that position which I endeavoured to take up. My view of the position

was this—that the expenditure for the year now expiring and the expenditure for the preceding year, on armaments and on naval and military purposes, was expenditure of a distinctly abnormal character, and that it was the duty of the Government to make an effort to commence to return to what I will call more normal expenditure. I will explain by two figures only what I mean by normal and abnormal expenditure. If you take the ten years from 1874 to 1884, you will find the average expenditure on the Army and Navy amounted to 25,000,000*l.* a year; that standard was closely adhered to during those ten years. If you take the three years 1885-6, 1886-7, and the coming year 1887-8, you will find that the average expenditure has risen from 25,000,000*l.* to over 31,000,000*l.*—an increase perfectly sudden, of about 6,000,000*l.* That the House will see was no light matter, and the honourable gentlemen who sit round me, and who may naturally enough be disposed to take a somewhat unfavourable view of my action, will admit that it is no small matter and no small difference which divided me from Her Majesty's Government. The right way to appreciate the magnitude of that difference is to turn the 6,000,000*l.* into taxation. What does it mean in taxation? Why, such an increase means a sum exceeding by 1,600,000*l.* the entire produce of the tea duty; it means a sum equal to two-thirds of the tobacco duty; it means a sum equal to three-fourths of the beer duty, and a sum equal to six-sevenths of the death duty. If you like to look at the increase in another way, and place on direct taxation this increase of 6,000,000*l.*—an increase, a sudden jump, of taxation in time of peace—it will mean an increase of 3*d.* in the income tax. I only mention that point in order to show that it was upon a question of exceedingly large magnitude on which I resigned, and one which, in my opinion, went to the very root of government and policy.

There has been, I think, a good deal of misconception as to the nature of the demand which I thought it my duty to make upon the two departments. People supposed that I expected that that large increase should be immediately reduced, but my right honourable friend the First Lord of the Treasury and the noble lord the First Lord of the Admiralty will bear me out in



saying that I made no such demand. I never expected that any very large reduction could be immediately made, nor did I even expect that we should be ever able to get back to the average expenditure of the ten years I have quoted. My right honourable friends will fully confirm me in this—that the only request which I made was that they should make a sensible and appreciable effort, which should be expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence, to return, or to make a commencement to return, to a more normal expenditure for military and naval purposes. I named no figure ; I carefully avoided it. I left the amount entirely to the discretion, and judgment, and superior knowledge of my right honourable friends. In my mind—and I may have mentioned it casually in conversation without insisting upon it—I thought that a reduction of 1,000,000*l.* in a time of peace upon the naval and military expenses of the country would have been an adequate and satisfactory reduction ; but my right honourable friends know perfectly well that I should not have made any obstinate quarrel about 100,000*l.*, 200,000*l.*, or even 300,000*l.* In fact, I really believe, if the worst came to the worst, I should have been satisfied with a reduction of half a million. It was only when I found from the views which my right honourable friends took of the position that they were absolutely unable to make even the commencement of an effort to return to a more normal state of expenditure—it was only then, Sir, I was forced by a power greater than party ties—forced by what I said in the country, forced by the knowledge I acquired at the Treasury—to offer my resignation to Lord Salisbury. I would mention two details which struck me as most unsatisfactory. The Army Estimates showed a reduction of 300,000*l.*, connected with the expenses of the military occupation in Egypt, and yet, in spite of that, the total of the Army Estimates showed an increase of 300,000*l.* That I did not understand, and there was a detail in the Admiralty Estimates which weighed with me very much. My noble friend the First Lord of the Admiralty showed a reduction of 500,000*l.* upon the total Estimates for the Navy ; but the whole of that was taken off one vote—the important vote for machinery ; and my argument was this—if so large a

reduction were possible on one item, surely some reduction might be made on other votes if they were carefully overhauled. I know it has been said I made impossible demands. I cannot pronounce whether they were possible or impossible. My own belief is that where there is a will there is a way, and the accuracy of the maxim may be proved by what took place in 1869, when the Government of the day and the Parliament of the day were under the impression that the military and naval expenditure of the country had reached an abnormal level. So strong was that impression, and so resolute was the Government of the day, that the Estimates in 1870 for these purposes, as compared with the Estimates of 1868, showed a reduction of no less than 4,000,000*l.* I never asked for or expected such a reduction as that. I thought I was reasonably entitled to ask that some reduction should be made in time of peace. There has been another misconception which I am anxious to clear away, and that is that I was supposed to have resigned upon the Budget. My resignation had nothing whatever to do with the Budget. I never should have thought of resigning on the Budget. The Budget is a plan for providing for the public services of the year, and my idea is that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer produces a plan which is not agreeable to his colleagues, it is his business to modify it or alter it until it is agreeable. But certainly he has no right to cram any financial scheme of his down the throats of his colleagues. That had nothing to do with my resignation. I resigned upon totally different grounds—the expenditure of special departments of the Government. My right honourable friend the First Lord of the Treasury laid down in this House in 1883 a proposition with which I almost entirely agree. He then laid it down very positively that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was primarily and principally responsible for every figure in the Estimates. I do not disagree with that proposition. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer must satisfy himself in his own mind on two points—first, that the demands put forward by the departments do not exceed the necessities of the year; and secondly, that the money which is voted by Parliament shall be expended in such a manner that the nation shall get full value for its money.

Those, Sir, are two points which I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be satisfied upon, and it was upon those two points I utterly and hopelessly broke down. I could not satisfy myself as to these demands. I felt satisfied if the foreign policy of this country was a peaceful foreign policy the Estimates were too high. I felt quite certain that our foreign policy at the present moment ought to be a peaceful policy. I do not mean that kind of peace which is the flattering phrase of platform orations; but I mean a genuine, effective, peaceful foreign policy which should be marked by the absence of unnecessary initiative, by an indisposition to interfere too promptly in European affairs, and, Sir, in fact, a policy of that character which should approach more nearly to the domain of non-intervention. Well, Sir, on this point I hold the strongest possible opinions, and I do not see my way to alter those opinions. But on the second point—namely, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be satisfied that the money Parliament votes is properly spent—I could feel no satisfactory assurance. In fact I had a suspicion—a feeling which I ought not to call a suspicion because it amounted almost to conviction—that the reverse was the case.

This is not the time, it would not be a proper occasion to examine that matter more minutely; but perhaps I may remind the House summarily that since 1883 we have had a series of what may be called departmental scandals, I believe, unprecedented in the history of this country. I will only run them over hastily on my fingers. In 1883 there was the exposure of scandalous defects in the Commissariat Department in Egypt in the first campaign. There was subsequently with respect to the second Egyptian campaign the exposure of the brittle swords, bent bayonets, and jamming cartridges. You then had in connection with the financial management of the Admiralty that grave scandal that attaches to the Government that left office in 1885, that the Admiralty was discovered to have spent a large amount without the knowledge of the Treasury, and apparently without its own knowledge. Then, Sir, you had the very serious evidence which was given to the House and the public by the total failure of three most expensive ships—the

Ajax, the Agamemnon, and the Impérieuse—to fulfil the expectations of their designers, although they had cost no less than a million and a half of money. Then you had—all these scandals following one upon another—the bursting of several guns, and all the charges of inefficiency and worse than inefficiency which accompanied those incidents. I took no part in the discussions in the House upon any of these subjects; I was not qualified to take part in such discussions, but I listened to them attentively, and this series of rapidly succeeding departmental scandals produced a most unpleasant and even worse effect upon my mind. I could not feel any assurance whatever that that series of departmental scandals had made the same deep impression upon the mind of my right honourable friend (Mr. W. H. Smith), or upon the mind of my noble friend (Lord G. Hamilton). I do not say that the least bit to impute blame to them; but these things did produce an impression on my mind which I could not shake off.

There is only one more question I should like to clear up if I may do so without trespassing on the time of the House. It has been widely stated, and on authority apparently, that I resigned my office in haste; in fact, I have seen it stated that I resigned in a temper; and I observed that my resignation was designated by a Government organ as an escapade, whatever that may be. I should like to tell the House exactly what the facts are, because they should be known. This controversy about expenditure has been going on between me, my right honourable friend, my noble friend the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Prime Minister, almost since the commencement of the Government. It has been going on in a perfectly friendly manner, and, indeed, nothing has occurred to diminish the friendly feeling which exists between my right honourable friends and myself. But, as a matter of fact, I brought my views on the questions of army and navy expenditure before Lord Salisbury as long ago as the month of August last, in a conversation I had with him in Arlington Street. I expressed my views to him and told him how strongly I felt upon this subject. The House is aware that in a speech at Dartford I specially alluded to the subject; I alluded to it briefly but strongly; and I think

that the First Lord of the Treasury and the First Lord of the Admiralty were aware how strong a meaning I attached to my expressions on that occasion. In the month of October I went down to address a meeting at Bradford. The morning before I had another long conversation with the First Lord of the Treasury and with Lord Salisbury, also in Arlington Street, and again I indicated most clearly to them that unless there was an effort to reduce the expenditure it was impossible that I could remain at the Exchequer. About the middle of October I wrote to the First Lord of the Treasury and to the First Lord of the Admiralty, requesting them as a particular favour to get the Army and Navy Estimates prepared, so that they might be considered by the Government before Christmas, because not only was I anxious that if these matters had to come before the Cabinet they should be considered while there was time and leisure to deal with them, but also that if the decision of the Cabinet as to the amount of the Estimates was to be against me I should not continue in my office, but should resign at such a moment as to give Lord Salisbury the most ample margin of time to make any appointment necessary before the meeting of Parliament. On December 13 I wrote to Lord Salisbury that from all I heard I feared he would have before long to decide between the great spending departments and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On Thursday, December 16, I had another protracted conversation with Lord Salisbury upon the whole question, in which I clearly indicated to him that the matter was approaching a crisis. On Monday, December 20, the Estimates were communicated to me—the Navy Estimates by my noble friend in the morning, and the Army Estimates by my right honourable friend in the afternoon. It appeared to me that the position which they took up was one which admitted of no modification, of no alteration. I was aware of what the mind of the Prime Minister was on the subject. On Monday, December 20, I was put in a corner; I had no option but to write to Lord Salisbury to resign my office.

I have troubled the House with these facts because I want to show the House that the idea that my action was taken in a hurry is entirely wrong. I greatly doubt whether any Minister

ever took action on any grave question more deliberately, after longer and more anxious consideration. Those who suppose that I could be capable of resigning the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer in a hurry or in a temper hardly do justice to their own judgment. There is no position open to a private individual prouder, or more honourable, than that of Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. It is not a position which any one is likely hastily to resign. I can assure my right honourable friends around me, it was a very hard and bitter thing for me to have to do, to sever my connection with the Government and to resign a position so honourable, although so anxious and responsible. But I could not help it; I was pledged by speeches I had made. May I make this remark? The relations which exist between the Ministry and the people are nowadays very direct and very close. Owing to the practice of holding those large meetings, which have become so general and so common, a Minister or a leader of the Opposition is brought into close contact with the people. He discourses before them with the utmost freedom, and without much qualification, on public affairs. The practice may have its advantages or its disadvantages; but the practice exists, and I cannot conceive anything more disastrous or ruinous, more fatal to the healthy tone of English public life, than that the people should take it into their heads that a Minister or a leader of the Opposition, whoever he may be, who comes down to address them, thinks of nothing but exciting a momentary and a passing cheer, and leaves the meeting straightway forgetting what manner of man he was. I hope it will not have to be imputed to me with justice, or accuracy, that I, knowingly or intentionally, contributed to produce such a belief. I have laid before the House as rapidly as I could the various reasons which forced me on December 20 to write to Lord Salisbury a letter which I am permitted to read. The House will understand that a further opportunity will arise for a more exhaustive and analytical examination of the expenditure of the country, and I will not anticipate that opportunity. All I do is to lay briefly before the House the reasons which forced me to leave the Government. On December 20 I wrote to Lord Salisbury :—

‘ Dear Lord Salisbury,—The approximate estimates for the Army and Navy for next year have been to-day communicated to me by George Hamilton and Smith. They amount to 31,000,000*l.*—12,500,000*l.* for the Navy, and 18,500,000*l.* for the Army. The Navy votes show a decrease of nearly 500,000*l.*, but this is to a great extent illusory, as there is a large increase in the demand made by the Admiralty upon the War Office for guns and ammunition. The Army estimates thus swollen show an increase of about 300,000*l.* The total 31,000,000*l.* for the two services, which will in all probability be exceeded, is very greatly in excess of what I can consent to. I know that on this subject I cannot look for any sympathy or effective support from you, and I am certain that I shall find no supporters in the Cabinet. I do not want to be wrangling and quarrelling in the Cabinet, and therefore I must request to be allowed to give up my office and retire from the Government. I am pledged up to the eyes to large reductions of expenditure, and I cannot change my mind on this matter. If the foreign policy of this country is conducted with skill and judgment our present huge and increasing armaments are quite unnecessary, and the taxation which they involve perfectly unjustifiable. The War Estimates might be very considerably reduced if the policy of expenditure on the fortifications and guns and garrisons of military ports, mercantile ports, and coaling-stations were abandoned or modified. But of this I see no chance, and under these circumstances I cannot continue to be responsible for the finances. I am sure you will agree that I am right in being perfectly frank and straightforward on this question, to which I attach the very utmost importance; and, after all, what I have written is only a repetition of what I endeavoured to convey to you in conversation the other day.

‘ Believe me to be yours most sincerely,

‘ RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.’

I wrote that letter on December 20, and on December 22—late in the evening—I received the following reply from Lord Salisbury, which I am permitted to read to the House:—

‘Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: December 22, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I have your letter of the 20th from Windsor. You tell me, as you told me orally on Thursday, that 31,000,000*l.* for the two services is very greatly in excess of what you can consent to; that you are pledged up to the eyes to large reductions of expenditure and cannot change your mind in the matter; and that, as you feel certain of receiving no support from me or from the Cabinet in this view, you must resign your office and withdraw from the Government. On the other hand, I have a letter from Smith telling me that he feels bound to adhere to the estimates which he showed you on Monday; and that he declines to postpone, as you had wished him to do, the expenditure which he thinks necessary for the fortification of coaling stations, military ports, and mercantile ports. In this unfortunate state of things I have no choice but to express my full concurrence with the views of Hamilton and Smith, and my dissent from yours—though I say it, both on personal and public grounds, with very deep regret. The outlook on the Continent is very black. It is not too much to say that the chances are in favour of war at an early date; and, when war has once broken out, we cannot be secure from the danger of being involved in it. The undefended state of many of our ports and coaling stations is notorious; and the necessity of protecting them has been urged by a strong Commission and has been admitted on both sides in debate. To refuse to take measures for their protection would be to incur the greatest possible responsibility. Speaking more generally, I should hesitate to refuse at this time any supplies which men so moderate in their demands as Smith and Hamilton declare to be necessary for the safety of the country. The issue is so serious that it thrusts aside all personal and party considerations. But I regret more than I can say the view you take of it; for no one knows better than you how injurious to the public interests at this juncture your withdrawal from the Government may be. In the presence of your very strong and decisive language I can only again express my very profound regret.

‘Believe me, yours very sincerely,

‘SALISBURY.’



The House will see that that letter is absolutely final and conclusive. Lord Salisbury did not demur to my suggestion that it was no use bringing the matter before the Cabinet. Lord Salisbury did not request that the whole matter might be placed before him as First Lord of the Treasury in order that he might personally examine it. He expressed his entire concurrence with the spending departments and his total dissent from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he said that under the circumstances he had nothing to propose and nothing to do but to express his deep regret. The House will see that that was a letter which brought things to a conclusion. Therefore, on December 22, on the same evening, I thus wrote to Lord Salisbury :—

\* Carlton Club : December 22, 1886.

‘ Dear Lord Salisbury,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of to-day’s date accepting my resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. I feel sure you will believe me when I express my deep and abiding appreciation of the unvarying kindness which you have shown me, and of the patience and indulgence with which you have always listened to the views on various public matters which I have from time to time submitted to you. The great question of public expenditure is not so technical or departmental as might be supposed by a superficial critic. Foreign policy and free expenditure upon armaments act and re-act upon one another. I believe myself to be well-informed on the present state of Europe ; nor am I aware that I am blind or careless to the probabilities of a great conflict between European Powers in the coming year. A wise foreign policy will extricate England from continental struggles, and keep her outside of German, Russian, French, or Austrian disputes. I have for some time observed a tendency in the Government attitude to pursue a different line of action, which I have not been able to modify or check. This tendency is certain to be accentuated if large estimates are presented to and voted by Parliament. The possession of a very sharp sword offers a temptation which becomes irresistible to demonstrate the efficiency of the weapon in a practical manner. I remember the vulnerable and scattered character of the empire, the universality

of our commerce, the peaceful tendencies of our democratic electorate, the hard times, the pressure of competition, and the high taxation now imposed, and with these factors vividly before me I decline to be a party to encouraging the military and militant circle of the War Office and Admiralty to join in the high and desperate stakes which other nations seem to be forced to risk. Believe me, I pray you, that it is not niggardly cheese-paring or Treasury crabbedness, but only considerations of high State policy which compel me to sever ties in many ways most binding and pleasant. A careful and continuous examination and study of national finance, of the startling growth of expenditure, of national taxation resources, and endurance, has brought me to the conclusion, from which nothing can turn me, that it is only the sacrifice of a Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the altar of thrift and economy which can rouse the people to take stock of their leaders, their position, and their future. The character of the domestic legislation which the Government contemplate, in my opinion, falls sadly short of what the Parliament and the country expect and require. The foreign policy which is being adopted appears to me at once dangerous and methodless, but I take my stand on expenditure and finance, which involve and determine all other matters, and, reviewing my former public declarations on this question, and having no reason to doubt their soundness, I take leave of your Government, and especially of yourself, with profound regret, but without doubt or hesitation.

· Yours most sincerely,

‘ RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL. ’

I have now placed before the House the causes of my resignation, and I have sincerely to thank the House for the indulgence which has been accorded to me.

## THE PERILS OF THE UNION PARTY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JANUARY 31, 1887.

[Some of the warnings contained in the following speech were hotly resented at the time, but the justice of most of them was admitted even before the close of the year. The celebrated 'Round Table Conference' was held at Sir William Harcourt's house—the party consisting of Sir W. Harcourt himself, Mr. J. Morley, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir George Trevelyan. All attempts to reconcile the Liberal Unionists with the bulk of the party utterly broke down, but Sir George Trevelyan found it possible to satisfy himself that Mr. Gladstone had made reasonable concessions, and was soon afterwards rewarded with a Gladstonian seat in Parliament. The comparison of the Liberal Unionists to a 'useful kind of crutch' has derived fresh significance from subsequent events. The history of the 'Round Table Conference' proves that even at this early period the 'crutch' was very nearly breaking down.

Some important suggestions with regard to the Estimates were made in this speech, and the untruthfulness of the assertion that Lord Randolph resigned on the question of arming the coaling stations was exposed. But too many powerful persons were interested in having the assertion continually repeated to admit of the denial producing much effect at the moment.]

THE battle of the Union may be over in Ireland, but it is not over in England. The battle of the Union has still to be fought out in England. There are various ways of maintaining the Union. There is a certain school of Unionists who, I think, are at the present moment imitating the conduct of the old Ephesians, who thought they could resist and check the new religion by perambulating the streets for hours, crying out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' And there are some persons at the present time who, by constantly clamouring and talking

of the Union, and denouncing any one who they think is endangering the Union, think that they can maintain the Union for all time. That would not be the method that I would recommend to honourable members on this side of the House. Honourable members on this side of the House profess to be anxious to maintain the legislative union between England and Ireland. Opposite to them sits the party of Repeal. They are your opponents now; but if you fail to retain your hold on the English people they and their policy will be your successors. I believe that the right way to maintain the Union is to identify the Government of the Union—the party of the Union—in the minds of the English people with good government, with efficient administration, and with progressive legislation. But if, unfortunately, it should happen that the Government and party of the Union should become identified in the minds of the English people with the reverse of those three factors, or should fall short of the standard to which the English people in these respects are looking, then I greatly fear that before long—possibly sooner than some may expect—down will go your Government, down will go your party, and, with them, down will go that Union to which you profess to be so devoted. I notice a tendency on the part of the party of the Union to attach too much importance to precarious Parliamentary alliances which are as transient and uncertain as the shifting wind, and too little to the far more important question—how to keep the English people at the back of the party of the Union. When I was in the Government I made it my constant thought and desire to make things as easy as possible for the Liberal Unionists, to advocate the introduction of such measures as they might conscientiously support as being in accordance with their general principles, and to make such electoral arrangements as might enable them to preserve their seats. But I frankly admit that I regarded the Liberal Unionists as a useful kind of crutch, and I looked forward to the time, and no distant time, when the Tory party might walk alone, strong in its own strength and conscious of its own merits; and it was to the Tory party, mainly, that I looked for the maintenance of the Union. If the Tory party want to know the danger of their position they have only to watch carefully the negotiations which

the right honourable gentleman opposite<sup>1</sup> is conducting at the Round Table with the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham,<sup>2</sup> who is acting, as far as I am aware, with the knowledge and not without the consent of the noble lord opposite.<sup>3</sup> So greatly is the right honourable gentleman the member for West Birmingham enamoured of the progress of the negotiations, with such hope and confidence does he regard them, that he is not satisfied with the Round Table; he purposes that it should be a rounder and a larger table, at which Lord Salisbury is to meet the right honourable gentleman the member for Mid-Lothian, and the noble marquis opposite is to meet the honourable member for Cork, and there, after sweet converse, devise a scheme for the future government of Ireland. I do not know what are the feelings of honourable members on this side of the House, but I know that my own feeling with regard to these proceedings of the right honourable member for West Birmingham is that he is pursuing an erroneous and mistaken course. Honourable members on this side of the House will, I think, never follow a line of policy which by any reasonable construction can create in Dublin anything in the nature of an Irish Parliament. That is the clear position of the Tory party. That is the position from which under no pretence of local self-government shall we depart, and it would be well for the right honourable gentleman the member for Birmingham, who is now indulging in such extraordinary gyrations, to recognise that, whatever schemes of Home Rule for Ireland may commend themselves to him, they are not, under any circumstances, likely to commend themselves to members on this side of the House.

I pass on to glance at the programme of legislation contained in the gracious Speech. I observe a strong family resemblance between that programme in the Queen's Speech and the programme set forth in a certain speech made in Kent not long ago,<sup>4</sup> though the speech was at the time it was made declared by certain organs to have no Ministerial authority. The programme

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Harcourt, who has since given a remarkable account of these negotiations.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chamberlain.

<sup>3</sup> The Marquis of Hartington.

<sup>4</sup> The Dartford speech, *supra*, p. 68.

I consider to be an ample and abundant programme. Of course it is impossible to judge of the merits of that programme merely by the titles of the Bills; but I have hope that those Bills, when produced, will be found to contain much that is good and much that is wise, and that if there should be portions of those measures which fall short of what is required, the Government will be glad to be guided by the wisdom of Parliament. I turn to another part of the Queen's Speech which more closely concerns me—the paragraph which states that the Estimates will be laid before the House and framed with due regard to economy and efficiency. It is a curious thing that this last statement with regard to the Estimates being framed with due regard to economy and efficiency had almost fallen into disuse. It is very rarely used nowadays. I suppose it is the strong proclivities of the present Government that have rescued it almost from oblivion. But I must say that I regard it as very like the manœuvre of waving a red flag to a bull, for if the Estimates are framed with due regard to economy and efficiency they must have been greatly altered since I left the Cabinet. It is quite possible that there may have been some alteration, because I observe that Lord Salisbury, speaking in another place, was good enough to say that I, in common with all other public men—and of course he included himself as one of the most public men in the country—was deeply impressed with what he called the rapid and most injurious increase of public expenditure. Really I believe that this is the first indication I have ever had from Lord Salisbury that he was of that opinion. I look upon it as a distinct advance; and I am not at all disinclined to take the credit of his conversion to myself. At any rate I take those words 'most injurious,' and I commend them to the attention of the House of Commons. When the head of the Government admits in his place in Parliament that the rise in expenditure has been 'most injurious,' it is certain that he is prepared to co-operate with Parliament in reducing public expenditure. Parliament is absolutely impotent to promote economy unless the Government lead the way. We may be of opinion that the expenditure of this country is abnormal and exceptional, but how are we to give effect to that opinion? Are we to move

an amendment to the Address or resolutions in the House to that effect? That would be a resolution or an amendment which the Government would be bound to treat as a hostile motion, and which, if carried, would terminate the existence of the Government. No one on this side of the House would be free to initiate or to take part in any act of this character. As far as regards getting Parliament to pronounce an opinion on the expenditure of the country, that mode of action is out of our power. Therefore we are thrown upon the ordinary proceedings in committee of supply. What takes place? A Minister comes down with the Army or Navy Estimates. He makes a long statement, probably of an optimistic character, which, as a rule, is listened to by a thin House; and the members who listen are so exhausted at the end of the statement that they are quite incapable of discussing the contents of that statement. Then suppose that we adduce a number of facts tending to show great extravagance on the part of the department. What takes place? In those statements of ours there would probably be something that was inaccurate as well as things that were accurate. The Minister gets up; he fastens upon their inaccuracies; he proves them to be such with every appearance of virtuous indignation, and he sits down amid Ministerial cheers, uniformly overlooking all that was accurate or valuable in the facts submitted to him. The next morning the papers would have something to this effect: 'The First Lord of the Admiralty (or the Secretary of State, as the case might be) satisfactorily and finally disposed of the frivolous and absurd charges brought before the Committee by the honourable member for Paddington.' That would be the result of our efforts to promote economy. So the expenditure goes gaily on. I say therefore that I am right in holding that unless the Government leads the way Parliament is absolutely impotent. I have a suggestion to make to the First Lord of the Treasury which he may be able to consider. It is that the discussion of the Army and the Navy Estimates, and indeed the discussion of Ministerial statements connected with the Estimates generally, would be improved, and the House would be enormously assisted, if the Minister in charge of Estimates, instead of making a long speech, which is only the

reading of a written document, were to circulate with the Estimates, or some days before the discussion of them, the written statement which he would otherwise read in the House. Then members would come down to the discussion of the Estimates, having had ample time and opportunity to get up the facts, and fully prepared to initiate and sustain a useful discussion of great public questions.<sup>1</sup> I commend this suggestion to the consideration of my right honourable friend. It is a course I have for some time wished to see adopted, and I really think it would be a convenience and a saving of time. My right honourable friend was good enough to say in answer to me, and to say it in a speech of generosity and kindness, for which I desire to thank him, that he would welcome any assistance from me in the direction of economy, and would place all information at my disposal or that of the House, and would give us every facility, either by way of special discussion or committee or commission, for arriving at the true reasons of this great increase of expenditure. Encouraged by that invitation of my right honourable friend, I make another suggestion which he and the Government may consider. The fact of the increase of six millions in the Army and Navy Estimates as compared with three years ago is not disputed, and I would suggest that, in order to meet the apprehensions of the House and of the people, my right honourable friend should be content to produce the Estimates, should take the first votes in each, and should then allow them to go to a Committee of the House of Commons, to be thoroughly gone through by a powerful and properly constituted Committee that would be authorised to send for persons and records, to take evidence, and to get all necessary information. I believe that that is a course which the House would be inclined to support, which the public would approve, and which would have the advantage that it would relieve the Government from the responsibility for the increase, which responsibility they ought not to bear, because it is an increase which they inherit, and it is not an increase for which they are personally responsible.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was adopted, to the great convenience and advantage of all who had to study the Army and Navy Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> This led to the appointment of select committees on the Army and Navy Estimates, the evidence taken before which is of the utmost value to all who



I desire as a matter of personal explanation to allude to the question of the coaling stations, because I was unable to do so the other night. There seems to be a great deal of misapprehension about this question of the coaling stations. I never resigned upon the question of the coaling stations—never. In conversation with my right honourable friend—and long conversations we had—we went through the Army Estimates item by item, and my right honourable friend was of opinion that not one of those items could be reduced. At the end of a conversation, when I asked him whether it was quite impossible to make the smallest reduction in the Army Estimates, he said there was only one item, of 400,000*l.*, on which a reduction could be made, and its reduction he would never consent to, as it was the vote for fortifying the coaling stations. In the correspondence with Lord Salisbury I mentioned that this was an item in which a reduction might be made if the policy of the Government could be reconciled with the reduction, and on that intimation Lord Salisbury, who is a master of the art of tactics, at once with cleverness identified my resignation with the question of the coaling stations. Really I never resigned upon the coaling stations, I resigned upon the broad question of retrenchment—whether there was to be retrenchment or there was not to be. I considered that I was absolutely pledged to retrenchment, and, unless the Government went in for it, it was impossible for me to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. I do not wish to say much about the coaling stations ; but I may take the opportunity of saying that if we are to adopt a policy of expenditure upon the fortification of coaling stations we shall be showing conclusively the utter baselessness of the well-known proverb that a burnt child dreads the fire. The House may not be aware that this year we come to the practical termination of the enormous terminable annuities—no less than five millions a year—which were created by Lord Palmerston to raise loans for fortifications ; there were other loans included, but the main

wish to comprehend the system on which both Army and Navy are managed. In the first year, 1887, Lord Randolph Churchill was chairman of the committee. Afterwards two committees were appointed, Lord Randolph continuing to preside over that dealing with Army Estimates.

portion of the annuities which practically come to an end this year were for the loans for fortifications; and it is not too much to say that of that money which was expended upon fortifications years and years ago, and which you have just paid off, two-thirds or three-fourths of it was absolutely thrown into the gutter. I think it is quite probable that if the right honourable member for Mid-Lothian, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and when he had that great dispute with Lord Palmerston in which Lord Palmerston said he would sooner lose Mr. Gladstone than lose Portsmouth Harbour—if he had stuck to his guns, and had stood out against Lord Palmerston, the country might have been saved the outlay of many millions. As to the coaling stations, all I have to say is that, if you can show me that the moneys will not be wasted, that the engineers know how to construct scientific fortifications, and that you will arm them when they are constructed and maintain them in an efficient state, I shall have nothing to say against the policy; but I approach the question with the utmost apprehension and scepticism because of the previous experience of this country on the question, which certainly honourable gentlemen ought not to exclude from their consideration. It is a great question, worthy of the consideration of the House, whether the policy of the defence of the British Empire does not depend upon the lines of foreign policy which we adopt towards other nations—not by any means a policy of cowardice, but a policy of the careful avoidance of all unnecessary entanglements. I would venture to repose the policy of the defence of the Empire on the patriotism and loyalty of a free and contented people, animated not so much by the strength of their fortifications as by their undying historic memories. I would prefer to repose the defence of the British Empire upon a careful, thrifty, and frugal husbanding in time of peace of national resources, in order that in time of war they may be exuberantly displayed in all their irresistible might. I am not at all clear that these general remarks do not indicate a safer and more economical policy for the defence of the Empire than that of throwing ourselves hysterically into the embraces of engineers, or of lying down pusillanimously in a cemetery of earthworks. All

I venture to deprecate is legislating or spending money in a hurry and under the influence of clamour. It is supposed that the working classes take no interest in this question, that any criticism of national expenditure is not popular because the working classes do not pay taxes. A lot of people come to me and say, 'You have taken a most unpopular line; the working-classes do not care, they pay no taxes.' It seems necessary to point out, what has been pointed out before, that this question of expenditure concerns not only what the right hon. gentleman opposite calls the classes, but also deeply concerns the masses, because hon. gentlemen must bear this in mind—that out of every shilling's worth of tea which the workman purchases he pays 6*d.* to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; that out of every shilling's worth of tobacco he pays 10*d.*, and out of every shilling's worth of beer he pays 2*d.* Now, I would ask my hon. friends on this side of the House who are prepared to defend a policy of large expenditure, Are you going to put this question of the fortification of the coaling stations or the increase of the army and navy to the test of popular opinion, are you going to test its popularity by the imposition of new taxes? Will you propose to meet this 6,000,000*l.* by a re-imposition of the sugar duties? That would be a very practical way of testing its popularity. Will you raise the tea duties, or will you test the fidelity of your friends the licensed victuallers and ask them to contribute to these fortifications of the empire by an increase, and a very proper increase, of the beer duty? These are practical questions which I invite my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Treasury to answer. It is no use turning round on me and saying, 'The whole country desires this expenditure, and you are wrong,' or that economy is old-fashioned and out of date, unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer is prepared to get up in his place at the table and put such expenditure on the mass of the tax-payers of the country. My right hon. friend and his colleagues would be the last persons to propose that this expenditure should be placed entirely on the income tax, and I am sure they would not contemplate for one moment a permanent maintenance of the income tax at 8*d.* in the pound in time of peace. These are questions which I respectfully submit to the

attention of the Government and Parliament. This great question of public economy is not to be disposed of by mere *ad captandum* statements, or by general denunciation of all persons who wish to bring the expenditure of the country within normal limits. This is a matter which the Government must seriously consider. I feel perfectly certain that the attention of the people is being concentrated on this great question of expenditure, and I rejoice greatly that the right hon. gentleman the member for Mid-Lothian refused, and very properly refused, the other night to identify himself with it for fear of making it a party question. He appealed to those on this side of the House, and I hope he did not appeal in vain—he appealed to the Conservative party, whose best traditions are connected with public economy—to take up this question and put pressure on the Government, so that the Government, with the support of both sides of the House, may lead the way to a more reasonable expenditure of public money and to a reduction of taxation. I know there are many hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, whose opinion and whose esteem I value, who are greatly incensed against me for having taken the course I have done—for having resigned my place in the Government. They are severe in their criticism, sharp in their censure, and righteous in their wrath, when they consider my action. I can only say that I confidently believe that the progress of events will probably modify that judgment. It is not the first time that it has been my evil fortune to wrestle with the Tory party. I remember only about four years ago that so greatly did I displease the Tory party that there was hardly one Conservative member who would give me at that time so much as a nod of recognition. Why was that? I had proclaimed, I admit with much frankness, that I thought the Tory party was going wrong on a great principle. I have once more proclaimed, this time by action, my opinion that the Tory party is going wrong on the great question of expenditure, and again there appear all the charges of disloyalty, treachery, and such like, to which I am accustomed and to which I do not listen. I appeal on that subject to the tribunal of time. Any little political influence which I may possess—any little political strength which may

have been given to me—has not hitherto been drawn, for any practical or permanent purpose, from within the walls of this House, or from within that circle whose centre is Pall Mall. No, Sir, it has come from outside. I appeal on this question to the just and generous judgment of the people. I know that I have sought for nothing, absolutely nothing, except to protect and promote their most material interests, and on this great question of economy and retrenchment I patiently wait for the judgment of my countrymen.

## ON HIS RESIGNATION.

PADDINGTON, APRIL 2, 1887.

[This was the first occasion on which Lord Randolph Churchill met his constituents after his resignation, and hence he entered with some detail into his reasons for taking that step. The various sinister and evil motives which had been ascribed to him were briefly referred to, but personal jealousies and animosities were too powerful for a repudiation of these calumnies to receive fair consideration. This speech, however, caused considerable commotion in the great spending departments, and even those who had most bitterly opposed reform began to profess themselves zealous converts to it. The policy advocated by Lord Randolph was no longer openly attacked, but it was not perceptibly advanced by those who had constituted themselves its new and unwilling champions. It was justly pointed out in the following address that some of the concessions which had been refused to Lord Randolph in December 1886 were made to Mr. Goschen in January 1887. This was the only material change that had occurred in the situation.

It will be seen that there is a great deal in this speech which partakes of an autobiographical character, and which throws valuable light on the history of Lord Randolph's political opinions.

The latter part of the speech dealt with the 'Home Rule' question, and supported the Government in its efforts to restore order in Ireland.]

YOU have followed the course of politics during the last few years with interest and attention, and you will be aware that there are many instances of Ministers who have been obliged to separate from their colleagues, and in more than one case have found themselves also compelled to make things somewhat unpleasant for their former colleagues. There are many instances of that line of action. But I know that I was not much im-

pressed with the weight or with the character of these precedents, and I was determined that on no consideration whatever would I allow the great question of retrenchment and departmental reform to be discredited by any personal or partisan advocacy. I can understand that there may be some in this hall—possibly many—who will say, ‘Oh, yes; we do not disagree with that. That is very well. But when last we elected you to Parliament you were Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, and now you appear before us in the character of an unofficial and private member. Will you kindly explain how that transformation has taken place?’ It is my duty to answer that interrogatory, which I consider perfectly legitimate, in a frank and honest manner; consistently always, mind you, with obligations of honour and of duty towards my former colleagues. This I may say at starting, that in all probability, if it had fallen to me to occupy any other office in the Government besides that which I did occupy, I should have been in the Government now. But I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I had the honour of being leader of the House of Commons, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer I was almost entirely responsible for the public expenditure of this great empire; as leader of the House of Commons, I was largely responsible for the general policy of the Government, which had to be exposed and defended night after night in the House of Commons. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, I had to feel an absolute and honourable certainty in my mind that I was not taking one shilling, as it were, from your pockets or from the pockets of the people of this country which was not required by the exigencies of the public service. Now I ask you, Do you think, knowing what you know now, that I could have felt any certainty upon that point? Look at what has taken place since the beginning of the year with regard to the expenditure of public money. Look at the sad discoveries and disclosures—for I must really call them shameful—which have been brought before the public by the committee which has been appointed to inquire into the system of negotiating Admiralty contracts. I go further. I ask you to look at the report of the committee only just lately appointed to inquire into the cutlasses and the bayonets which

were supplied to your sailors, and on the excellence of which your sailors in time of war would have to rely. Is it not extraordinary that you have in the War Office a great department spending 18,500,000*l.* of public money, and that that department since 1871 has allowed your sailors to be armed with weapons which the Commission described as absolutely inefficient, untrustworthy, and unfit for service? That department has allowed that state of things to continue since 1871, and would not acknowledge that it was so, denied the statements of the Admiralty, and would not acknowledge it till an independent committee told them that this was the case. That is a department which spends 18,500,000*l.* per annum. Look at the speeches which have been made recently in Parliament by the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary to the Admiralty—against whom as individuals I have not a word to say—but in their speeches in Parliament they have pleaded guilty without qualification to an expenditure of public money in the past which really would not have discredited the Government of Russia. If you want to go further than this, I invite you all to study a Parliamentary paper which you can easily procure—viz. the report of Sir William Dunbar, the controller and auditor-general of public finance, on the expenditure of that vote of credit of eleven millions which was taken by Mr. Gladstone in 1885. If you study that you will come to the conclusion that, after all, on that particular matter which I put before you, I could not, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, have the smallest certainty that I was not taking money out of your pockets which would be wasted as much as if it were thrown into the gutter.

I dare say some of you will say, ‘That is all very well; there have been great scandals, but these would all have been known and dealt with without your taking so strong a step as resigning your office.’ I quite admit the apparent plausibility of that position, but I traverse it directly. All these things could not have been known, or if they had been known they would have attracted no attention whatever. Things would have gone on just the same as before. You would have had a plaintive remonstrance here and an indignant letter there; but the great torrent of other public matters would have swept them out of sight.



No remedy would have been applied to them. Now, gentlemen, as a matter of history, I believe I am right in saying that no Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever resigned before on the question of the expenditure of public money. Not one. I believe many Chancellors of the Exchequer have threatened to resign. I believe that many Chancellors of the Exchequer have been within an ace of resigning, but for some reason or other the crisis has been postponed. But my resignation had this effect, that it created, for one reason or another, such a stir that it turned and concentrated the full glare of public opinion—what I may call the electric light of public opinion—on to those two great spending departments, and it illuminated and brought before the eyes, even of the blindest, all the dark nooks and crannies, and all the odd ways of going to work, which characterise those two departments. People began examining and writing and speaking, and things began to ooze out and to be discussed, and be put in the way to be remedied, which otherwise would not have been known, or if they had been known would never have been noticed. There is more than that. As far as the question of expenditure was concerned, the commotion which was caused by my resignation of office did unmitigated good, and the more the Press denounced me the more I rejoiced, because I was perfectly certain that the more noise that was made the more the public would rouse and wake themselves—for the British public are at times so sluggish and so deaf and so fast asleep that you have to beat them to make them move—the more noise was made the more the public would rouse themselves to a sense of the national seriousness of the questions which were at issue. I resigned the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer because I knew what you know now, but what you did not know then—that the state of the public service, especially as regarded those two departments, was so scandalous, and so dangerous to every interest which you have at heart, that nothing but some great resounding blow would bring about the commencement even of a better state of things. Well, there were some who were interested apparently in defending the existing arrangement and in defending existing abuses, and I must say that really they were not very scrupulous in their manner of

dealing with me. They said I had resigned from motives of personal ambition. Why, gentlemen, if I had consulted motives of personal ambition alone I had only to stay where I was. I had so high a position that, if political position and great office can excite motives of personal ambition, I could desire nothing more. The mere fact of the position I occupied is an answer to the idiotic accusation that I resigned office from motives of personal ambition. Then they said I resigned because I was averse to the proper defence of our coaling stations and our mercantile ports. Gentlemen, my position was this: I said to the Admiralty and the War Office, 'You dispense between you on an average thirty-two millions of public money; if you spend that money properly you will have an ample balance to put your coaling stations and your mercantile ports in a state of satisfactory defence, and it is because you waste your money and because your money is expended profusely and extravagantly that you come before the public and ask for more sums to put these coaling stations and these mercantile ports in a state of defence.'

Well, then they said I wanted to bring in a popular Budget, and that I was ready to sacrifice the life of the nation and the safety of the nation to the exigencies of a popular Budget. I will tell you a little matter. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer made a disclosure the other day in the City of London and gave a little secret as to his Budget. I may tell you something with regard to mine. I had not the smallest ambition to bring in a popular Budget; I had a great ambition to bring in a good Budget, and I can tell you this, that there is all the difference in the world at times between a good Budget and a popular Budget. Without in the least going into the provisions of the Budget I contemplated, I have no hesitation in telling you that it contained projects and schemes which would have been decidedly unpopular. I have no doubt about it. I believe that it would have been sound financially; I believe that it would have been in accordance with financial orthodoxy; but I think it probable—and some of my colleagues thought it probable—that some parts of it might have aroused a great deal of unpopularity. That is my answer to the accusation that I was anxious to bring in a popular Budget. These accusations and insinuations were

utterly false and unfounded, and there is not a word of truth in them. I might, perhaps, have laid myself open by some unguarded expression to attacks of that kind; but what was my position? I was one man alone, unsupported by any of my colleagues, and a man in this position must expect to receive here a hard blow and there a shrewd dig. What was the result? Those two great departments, the War Office and the Admiralty, which between them absorb more than three-quarters of the whole of your Customs and Excise, have been exposed, have been placed upon their trial, and, I venture to say, have been condemned, and I hope are now in a fair way to be thoroughly reformed and renovated. Do not think for one moment that I place the smallest confidence in any of the professions made by the War Office and the Admiralty of future amendment. They have been very much woke up, but I remember those lines:—

‘The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be;  
The Devil got well, the devil a monk was he.’

And I have not the smallest doubt that if public attention were to relax, or if public attention were to be withdrawn and diverted to other matters, these two great departments would sink back into their former state of profuse, extravagant, and wasteful expenditure. But they shall not. The great work of economy and public retrenchment—which, mind you, was the great keystone of policy with Sir Robert Peel—that great work, still only begun, shall, if I can do anything, go on; and these two departments, and other departments which dispose of large sums of public money, know this—that they have in me a relentless enemy, who is supported, I am happy to say, and assisted, by many members of Parliament, by many agents, and who has under his control many sources of information, and who will never cease from watching them, from criticising them publicly in Parliament and in the country, until we get their expenditure of public money put upon a healthy and more business-like footing.

Before leaving these matters I should like to put before you that, though money considerations are not everything, yet it is not well to live in a region of romance and dispense with them

altogether. Money considerations are worthy of your attention, and I should like to put before you the exact sum in pounds, shillings, and pence which my action on the question of public expenditure, and in resigning my office, absolutely saved your pockets and saved the country. I think this will interest you. The immediate cause of my resignation, the crisis which precipitated it, was the Estimates of the War Office. The Secretary for War<sup>1</sup> placed before me Estimates for the current year which amounted to 18,561,000*l.*, and I said to him that I thought that sum, being 300,000*l.* in excess of the previous year, was an amount I could not consent to. I pressed him hard during a long conversation to make reductions on that amount. Now, the Secretary of State for War, a gentleman for whom I have the highest possible respect, and against whom I will not say one word, told me that there was not a single item upon which he could conscientiously accept any reduction. He wrote that to the Prime Minister at the time when there was this ministerial crisis. Then the resignation came, and all the bother. But is not this a most remarkable thing, that after the resignation the War Estimates underwent a revision, and the War Estimates have been reduced by the very considerable amount of 170,000*l.* odd? More than that, before I left office, so strong was the pressure I put upon the Admiralty—and I am bound to say the Admiralty responded admirably to that pressure—that the Admiralty Estimates showed a total reduction on the expenditure of last year of no less than 700,000*l.* I have got the very decent total of 870,000*l.* But there is another matter well worthy of your attention, to show the difficulty a Chancellor of the Exchequer is in, in taking care of your pockets. I had to deal with an estimate which was presented by the War Office, amounting to over half a million of money for expenditure, which had been incurred in connection with the defence of the Egyptian frontier. That expenditure had been incurred without the sanction of the War Office, without the knowledge of the Treasury, without the consent of Parliament, and I utterly declined to have anything whatever to do with it or to admit it in any way. It was, I thought, a most indefensible expenditure. I fought against that estimate from August to December,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. H Smith, at this date First Lord of the Treasury.

until within a few days of my resignation. I knew it would be an estimate that the House of Commons would hardly be persuaded to vote, but so great was the pressure put upon me by the Foreign Office as to the bankruptcy which would ensue in Egypt if we did not repay that sum to the Egyptian Government, and as to the possible issue of an International Commission, and other matters, that at the last moment I gave way. Well, in comes my successor, Mr. Goschen, who the moment this estimate was presented to him took just the same view as I did. He considered it absolutely unjustifiable expenditure, for which he would not be responsible to Parliament and to the Government. And I think he very wisely, owing to the great stir about economy, insisted upon economy somewhere. Consequently the Government have never presented that estimate to the House of Commons. Then I say I practically saved 170,000*l.*, the estimate for the War Office. I practically saved 700,000*l.* on the Navy Estimates, and I practically saved 500,000*l.* on the Supplementary Estimates; and so I practically saved some 1,400,000*l.* to the tax-payers of this country. I do not believe that any Chancellor of the Exchequer who has been in office so short a time as I was—less than seven months—could show a hard, fair, undeniable saving of so many pounds of the public money. I think you will agree with me in this—that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is a thoroughly high-minded and honourable man, will take the first opportunity of recognising that if he has any surplus to dispose of this year—and it will not be very large—yet in the manufacture of that surplus I may claim to have had the principal share. I think, then, that it is almost a pity, if this large saving of the public money was to be effected, that it was not effected by the Government before I resigned instead of after I resigned. Before I resigned I had made demands in the shape of retrenchment and economy which I considered to be not extravagant. More than that, I had set on foot two great and powerful agencies for securing economical and thrifty expenditure. I procured the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole of your Civil Service expenditure, and I am told on good information that that Royal Commission is doing most excellent work, not only by the actual inquiry and the

discoveries which it is making, but by the mere fact of this inquiry the public departments are being put upon their mettle and are setting their house in order. I am glad to have the opportunity of thanking Her Majesty's Government for agreeing to my suggestion that the thirty-one millions odd which the Army and Navy departments spend should be referred to a Parliamentary Committee,<sup>1</sup> and you may depend upon it that that act on the part of the Government will have the most beneficial effect upon the departments in the preparation of their estimates for Parliament. I think that I have made out, as I was bound to make out before you, my constituents, not at all an unsatisfactory balance-sheet, from a financial point of view, of profit and loss arising out of the action which I felt myself compelled to take in December last. I may be told, and I dare say there are some here who will say: 'Well, you may have done some little good; 1,400,000*l.*, that is good enough, but it is not enough to justify your resignation, because by your resignation and by the action which you took you endangered the great cause of the Union, and you endangered the union of the Unionist party.' Again I perfectly admit the legitimacy and the plausibility of that contention. There are others who say more. They go further and say: 'Oh, but you deserted the ship in the hour of danger.' Well, I think this last accusation is really too contemptible to be looked at. I am, and I think everybody knows I am, as strong a defender of the Union as ever I was at any moment, and the whole, the sole, and the only question which I turned over in my mind morning, noon, and night was this—Can I serve the cause of the Union, can I defend the Union, best inside or outside the Government? And I came to the conclusion that, at that moment, I could do better work for the cause of the Union outside the Government.

I take the first of the two accusations—the accusation that I endangered the cause of the Union by my resignation, and endangered the union of the Unionist party. I will tell you why I say this. I am now coming to my position as it was in January last, not as Chancellor of the Exchequer, but as leader

<sup>1</sup> This was done upon the motion of Lord Randolph Churchill himself, and it was a motion which no Government could have resisted.

of the House of Commons, and I directly traverse these two allegations. I do not believe there is in this country a more convinced supporter of the Union than I am. I had arrived at the conviction that the Union in its present form must be maintained by a process of argument totally devoid, totally bereft, of all prejudice or passion. I had examined the question of the Union to the very best of my ability, by bringing to the examination some amount of Irish knowledge, some amount of study of former history, and some amount of knowledge of contemporary politics, and I had come to this conclusion by the simple process of mental calculation—that the Union must be maintained because the project of Home Rule is utterly unmanageable and impracticable. This is my firm opinion of course, it is only an individual opinion—that you might if you liked, as a matter of experiment, place Mr. Gladstone in office to-morrow with an obedient and docile majority, and I am certain that it is not within his power, clever, eloquent, and ingenious as he is, as it is not within the power of any living man, to devise a scheme of Home Rule which will bear the test of Parliamentary discussion. That is my belief about Home Rule, which I shall never shrink from and never change. But I cannot expect that belief of mine, which I believe is your belief—I cannot expect it to be shared absolutely by the great mass of between four and five millions of electors in this country. These are the people we have got to convince; these are the people we have got to get at our back. There are two methods of maintaining the Union. There are two methods of getting the English people at your back and of repeating on another occasion the victory you won on a former occasion. There is the method of maintaining the Union—by a wise policy, so to convince the English people of the general excellence of your administration in foreign affairs, and in home and legislative matters, that the English people shall naturally, for their own interest, go to the back of a Unionist Government, so that the Unionist Government, in the face of any Parliamentary difficulty, could at any moment confidently go to the English people for renewed support. That is one method of maintaining the Union. Well, then, there is another method of maintaining the Union,

and that is by relying almost entirely on Parliamentary and party arrangements, by living as it were from hand to mouth, by calculating the chances and the lives of individual leaders—in fact, what I may call the happy-go-lucky method. Now, I do not say which of these two methods was being attempted at the time I left the Government. That is not necessary; but there was a distinct danger that the happy-go-lucky method would take the preference over what I may call the method by policy.

I am now about to touch on delicate ground, and I want you to follow me closely. I wish to explain to you why I felt I could no longer usefully fill the position of leader of the House of Commons, and why I felt that there were other persons who would fill it infinitely better than I could. Gentlemen, I must take you back some years, because we now live so fast that things are forgotten very rapidly. I must ask you to come back with me to the year 1880. That was a very dark and gloomy year for the Tory party. That was the year in which I began my active political life. You saw at that time a great, a strong, a powerful Government, which, as far as we could judge, had thoroughly deserved the confidence of the country, and which had carried the country through great difficulties, through great national dangers, which had thoroughly done its duty to the country, and was headed by one of the most experienced—one of the greatest men that England has ever produced. You saw that Government, apparently so strong, all of a sudden overthrown and hurled out of office, and you saw a new school of politics, and another leader take its place. Think of all those years, from 1880 to 1885. Think of the penalty you Englishmen, all of you, paid for that catastrophe—the penalty which you paid in your colonies, the penalty which you paid in the loss of your national greatness and your national character, the penalty which you paid in Ireland, the penalty which you paid in the general distrust which overspread the minds of all men and which influenced the course of all affairs. That election of 1880 made an enormous impression upon me. That was the time when my political life began, and I learned three lessons from that general election, which I have had thoroughly im-



pressed upon my mind, which I have never ceased, so far as I could, to inculcate on my fellow countrymen, and from which I have never changed, as I shall never change. I learned, in the first place, that the people of England—with them I am best acquainted, and they have the power in their hands—I learned that the people of England prefer a peaceful foreign policy. I do not mean a policy which will assent to the empire being attacked and ridden over, but I mean a policy which should avoid unnecessary interference in quarrels and struggles where British interests are not directly concerned. That was my first lesson. I learned another lesson, that the people of England were distinctly in favour of an economical and thrifty administration of the public services; and I learned a third lesson, that the people of England were distinctly in favour of legislation—honest, genuine, so far as it went—which should supply effectually all the admitted deficiencies in our law, that should reform generally all the admitted abuses in our social system. These were the three lessons which I learned, and which, in one way or another, I have endeavoured to propagate among those with whom I have come in contact politically. But from the year, 1880 to 1885 I hardly ceased for one moment, either in Parliament or in the country, from denouncing the Gladstone Administration for their lamentable shortcomings in these three respects. I never ceased from proclaiming on all occasions my belief, my conviction, and my honest intention that if it ever fell to me to take part in those matters and to control, guide, or influence the policy of the Tory party, those three main lines of policy which I have described to you, and which I consider to be well within the power and the principles of the Tory party, should be honestly and genuinely carried out.

Then there came the election of 1885. It was a most remarkable election. The Tory party won the boroughs and lost the counties. They won the boroughs because the borough population was a population trained to political discussion, because they believed in the professions which the Tory party had made, and knew of the shortcomings of the Radical Administration. But we lost the counties, and that you must bear in mind. After the election of 1885 you had raised by Mr. Glad-

stone the great vital and Imperial question of the maintenance or repeal of the Union. After a desperate struggle, the hazardous, critical, and touch-and-go nature of which will not, perhaps, generally be known for years—after a desperate struggle both in Parliament and in the country, Mr. Gladstone was defeated and a Unionist Administration was placed in office. But, though Mr. Gladstone was defeated, and though the policy of repeal was badly scotched, it was by no means killed. More than ever was I convinced that if you wished to maintain the Union between the two countries, and in support of that Union to retain the continued confidence of the people of Great Britain—more than ever was I convinced that you could only be successful by a genuine and effective application of those three great main lines of policy which I have described. To defend the cause of the Union, in which you have still to fight a desperate struggle, you must get behind you the overwhelming popular support of the people of England. Well, that was my conviction. I used to express it sometimes to my colleagues thus: ‘If you wish to make the Tory party with its Unionist allies strong, you must return to a practical carrying out of the principles and policy of Sir R. Peel,’ whom I believe to have been the greatest Tory Minister this century has produced, who, even more than Lord Beaconsfield, adopted all the principles and ideas of what people call Tory Democracy. Well, gentlemen, filled with these ideas, and with the full concurrence and support of the present Prime Minister, I made that speech at Dartford which I have reason to believe satisfied a large portion of public opinion in the country, and which was publicly accepted shortly afterwards by the present leader of the House of Commons as containing a true and faithful exposition of the programme, foreign and domestic, of the Unionist party. What I have to ask you is this, Did my resignation of office endanger the Dartford programme? No, it did not. My resignation of office made the realisation of the Dartford programme more certain, and the Dartford programme is more likely to be carried into effect now than it was when I resigned office. The foreign policy of the Government since my resignation has been profoundly and beneficially modified. I have complete confidence, so far as my information goes at the

present moment, that the English people may be certain that they are not likely to be involved in any European struggle arising out of the Bulgarian complications. I say no more on that subject. It may be challenged, but I do not think it will; it may be denied—I do not think it will; but no amount of denial or challenge can affect the truth of that statement.

I have spoken to you about the financial results of my resignation. On the question of legislation I cannot say much, because I do not know. It is not much use talking about legislation now for England and Scotland. The House of Commons has its hands full, and is likely to have its hands full for some time to come, with Irish subjects; but I feel confident on this point, that the strong liberal infusion which was made into the Cabinet in consequence of my resignation—and I use the word ‘liberal’ not in a party sense, but in the highest sense—can hardly fail to have a most beneficial effect upon the character of the legislation for the many wants of the country, and I am bound to say that what has taken place in the House of Commons confirms that belief. The Government has produced one or two promising Bills. From their Bill on land tenure in England, to modify and reform the antiquated customs which make the transfer of land so difficult and expensive among individuals, it is obvious that they are pursuing a liberal and progressive policy. I take their Irish Land Bill. Does not the production of that Bill show you the liberal spirit in which the Tory Government are now endeavouring to work? You do not know, you have no conception, how I have been persecuted both in public and private because I have sometimes tentatively and timidly advocated propositions which were described as atrociously Radical; but what do you suppose would have happened if I had, in 1881, proposed a Bill to Parliament, breaking leases, and interfering with the rights of the landlord to recover land in the event of the non-payment of rent? Gentlemen, it shows that truly liberal ideas are making progress. You see Lord Salisbury, a statesman, possessing the confidence of a great party, in order to deal with great national dangers and necessities, boldly putting aside all the worn-out traditions, the antiquated ideas of the past, and bringing for-

ward measures which, if you think over their character, are enough to make the Duke of Wellington and Lord Eldon turn in their graves. On this question of legislation I have only this suggestion to offer to Her Majesty's Government. They are so amiable about accepting my suggestions now that I think possibly they will consider it. I would advise them, if they have Bills on one or two questions in which the country is interested, such as local government, or metropolitan government, and the question of allotments for the agricultural labourers, to produce those Bills immediately. Not that the Government could hope under the present state of things to make progress with them, but because by so doing—and you must not throw away any chance in the struggle in which we are engaged—they will show the public that they do honestly and earnestly intend to redeem the pledges they made, and above all they will show to the country the effect of the factious and unpatriotic obstruction in which the whole Liberal Opposition is engaging. I have shown that, so far from doing harm, I did good by the step I took last December; and you must not think this is an afterthought. Much of what I tell you now is on record in documents which have been or may be published some day, and not one word that I have said to you this afternoon will be contradicted by people who are well acquainted with all the incidents which took place at the commencement of this year. I pray you not to think that I am saying all this to glorify myself in any way. I do not believe there is a person on the face of this earth more utterly callous and indifferent to praise or blame than I am. As a matter of fact I prefer abuse and denunciation. I have lived on it, I have thrived on it. I suppose that against me, both by foes and, I regret to say, sometimes by friends, have been hurled all the deadly shafts of political abuse which can be conceived, and the more they hurl them the more I have been fortunate and happy enough to retain some amount of public confidence. I do not care a bit about myself; but I want you to bear my arguments in mind, because I realise so fully—and I want you to realise as fully as I do—the awful and the desperate nature of the struggle in which we are now involved, a struggle between the Government of the Queen and the Imperial Parliament on the one hand, and

the forces of treason and sedition and anarchy in Ireland on the other. The struggle is no ordinary trial of strength between rival Parliamentary parties. This moment, in which we now are, is one of those moments which will from time to time occur in the lives of nations and of states, when the whole fabric and framework of political society is tried and shaken.

[Having examined the state of Ireland, and defended the Government for the introduction of the Crimes Act, Lord Randolph Churchill thus concluded:]

The attitude Mr. Gladstone has taken up is a new one in English political life. Hitherto it has been recognised that when any leader of a great party has propounded to the country a policy with regard to any great question, and that policy has been repudiated by the country—that leader, although he need lose no opportunity of still endeavouring to convince the English people of the merits of his policy, is at any rate bound by all the traditions of party life—by those traditions on which party life depends—to give a fair trial to the policy of his opponents, and fair play, and fair support, to the Government of the Queen. That has been the doctrine of every single English statesman without exception, since party life was first known in this country; but, for the first time, Mr. Gladstone has shattered that doctrine and set it at naught. It is that which makes the struggle so hard and difficult for the Government and for us. We have to deal with new circumstances, new conditions, and new difficulties which we could hardly have prepared for or foreseen. . . . You are now engaged in a great struggle, a life and death struggle, on behalf of all that you value and hold dear against what can only be described as pure anarchy, absence of law, and total disorder. This is the actual battle in which you are engaged now. Everything up to now has been mere skirmishing or reconnoissances in force. But this is an actual general engagement which is now going on in Parliament and in the country, and one on which the fate of the Empire hangs. I pray, gentlemen, that in this hour of trial, when the life of your Parliament, the existence of your Empire, the welfare of your people and the future of your race are all at stake—I pray that your resolution may be indomitable and that your courage and your hearts may be high.

## THE BATTLE OF THE UNION.

BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 14, 1887.

[In the session of 1887 obstruction again proved very formidable, and scenes of a discreditable character—apparently planned with the view of bringing the authority of the Chair into discredit—were not infrequent. On one occasion a compact body of Irish members marched out of the House, one of their number crying out ‘Down with the Speaker!’ It was to circumstances such as these that incidental allusion was made in the following speech.]

**I**T is an unfortunate and almost a deplorable matter that in this Eastertide of our Jubilee year we should find that the condition of the country is one of considerable, and of almost alarming, political commotion. We had hoped that this year might have witnessed some effort at an approach to harmony; we had hoped that this year might have been marked by at any rate a momentary laying aside of the more acute forms of party strife. But instead of that we find that the battle of the Union is raging more fiercely than ever, and that it is sought by some, by men of position and influence, to rouse the constituencies of Britain into a state of unwonted political excitement. What is the cause of this unfortunate state of things, and what are the objects of the person principally responsible for this state of things? The cause is this, that Mr. Gladstone, at the head of the party of Repeal, is seeking prematurely to coerce the people of England into a reversal of the decision solemnly arrived at by them less than nine months ago. I used specially the word prematurely to characterise this movement on the part of the party of Repeal; because what are the facts? Let me take you back a short time. Let us make sure of our ground. In the month of November 1885—a month which I and many of you

here recollect very well—in that month, as the result of the general election which then took place, Mr. Gladstone found himself at the head of a Parliamentary following numbering 335 members of the House of Commons. He might if he had liked, within certain lines and certain courses, have carried on the government of the country with credit and success. He took office in the early part of 1886, as he had a perfect right to do, being at the head of the strongest party in the House of Commons; but, having taken office, he produced a plan for the future government of Ireland of which I will only say that it absolutely revolutionised the Parliamentary relations and the constitutional relations existing at the present time between Great Britain and that country. This project sharply divided his party, and was defeated in the House of Commons by a respectable majority. He, in November 1885, found himself at the head of a united party. His project left him with a divided party. He appealed to the country against the decision of the House of Commons last July, as he had a perfect right to do, and the result of that election was that his Parliamentary following of 335 was reduced to no more than 190 members of the House of Commons. His Tory opponents increased their strength from 250 to 315 members of the House of Commons. Could anything be more plain, more unmistakable, more undeniable, than the character of the result of the last general election? Mr. Gladstone's project for the government of Ireland was repudiated by Parliament, and afterwards by the country, root and branch. The country desired that the Union in its present form should be maintained and that Ireland should continue to be governed by the Queen's Government, responsible to the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. Now, to show that Mr. Gladstone perfectly understood in his own mind how clear, how unmistakable was the decision of the country, I have only to remind you that the moment the result of the election was known Mr. Gladstone immediately resigned office without venturing to meet Parliament as a Minister. That action showed that he had very little doubt at that time as to what England wanted. What was the result? A Tory Government came into office supported by 315 members of the House of

Commons belonging to the Tory party, and receiving an independent general support from upwards of 80 Liberal Unionists. That Government, on the very first night of its existence—and I speak with knowledge on this subject, because I was concerned in that matter—solemnly pledged itself to Parliament that the first moment at which it became conscious that the forces of lawlessness in Ireland could not be controlled by the existing law and by existing criminal procedure, that very moment it would go to Parliament and would apply for special legislative powers. That pledge was given in August last in both Houses of Parliament, and that pledge was registered by the country. After nine months of careful observation, of patient and prudent examination, her Majesty's Government are now redeeming that solemn pledge. They have found that the state of Ireland is such that if the Queen's Government and Parliament are to continue to exercise authority, and effectually to govern in Ireland, it is absolutely necessary that the Government should be strengthened by special legislative provisions for the detection and for the punishment of crime and for the repression of intimidation. That being so, we have a tremendous outcry from the party of Repeal; there is great sound and fury in the Radical ranks, and we have demonstrations in Hyde Park, and inflammatory letters from Mr. Gladstone, and agitation of every kind; but if you think it over you will agree with me that in the action of the Government, which is so furiously assailed, there is nothing in the least bit inconsistent with the result of the last general election—a result to which you in Birmingham very largely contributed—and there is nothing more false than the allegation which is now put forward by many Radical speakers, that the Conservative party at the last general election pledged themselves against that kind of legislation which is improperly termed coercive legislation. What the Conservative party pledged themselves to was this—that they would maintain the Union in a practical form, that they would continue to govern Ireland, from and under the authority of the Parliament at Westminster, by the ordinary law it possible; but if not possible by the ordinary law, then by a strengthened law. I feel that there can be no doubt whatever



in any reasonable mind that the great body of the people perfectly understood that pledge. And on that pledge the Tories and Liberal Unionists were returned to Parliament.

Let us consider the position of the opponents of the Government. What is Mr. Gladstone's present purpose? Mr. Gladstone proposes by a double method of Parliamentary obstruction and of extra-Parliamentary agitation to bring the House of Commons, this young House of Commons only just elected, into popular disrepute; to irritate the mind of the masses of the people against the present House of Commons; to deprive it of popular sympathy, popular confidence, and so to paralyse and put an end to it. With that aim he is not particularly scrupulous what means he employs. I will mention one, a most serious one, to which I earnestly invite your attention. Mr. Gladstone deliberately permits and encourages—and I say that, because he could discourage it and stop it if he wished—he deliberately permits and encourages movements of various kinds, by individuals and by factions, which have for their object the weakening of the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons. When I was at Bradford in the month of October last, addressing a great audience like the present, I told the meeting I was addressing that Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt and others had this design in their minds, to weaken the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons. My declaration on that subject was considered unfounded and premature. But I want to know whether events have not borne it out. This manœuvre of Mr. Gladstone's is one of the most insidious character. The English people, if they value their liberties, cannot be too much on their guard against it. Just as the House of Commons is the vital principle of English liberty, so the authority of the Speaker is the vital principle of the House of Commons. If you assail that authority successfully, if you allow it to be weakened or seriously wounded, the House of Commons dies or decays. It becomes nothing else but a tumultuous and brawling mob; and with the death of the House of Commons dies English liberty. Up to the present time the leaders of both parties in the State have been very jealous of preserving in all its integrity the authority of the Speaker; and nothing

indicates to my mind more clearly the sheer and utter desperation to which Mr. Gladstone is reduced than that he should, from his great and high position, deliberately, as I say, permit and encourage movements which have for their object the destruction of the authority of the Chair. But there is even yet another feature which renders his conduct even more blamable. Who is the present Speaker of the House of Commons? He is one of the most respected and experienced members of Parliament. He bears an honoured name—a name which alone should almost entitle him to the support and to the respect of every member of Parliament. He was, moreover, chosen for the high office of Speaker by Mr. Gladstone himself. It was Mr. Gladstone who submitted his name to the House of Commons for the Speakership. But now, when his authority is assailed in every way, when exclamations are made by members of Parliament of a character most insulting to that distinguished man, Mr. Gladstone is never in his place either to protest against the insults or protect the authority of the Chair. I said that Mr. Gladstone's method for effecting his purpose is essentially a double method. He endeavours, on the one hand, to intimidate and to coerce Parliament and the people of England into a reversal of their decision at the last election, and by a studied reticence, by what I may call a negative attitude towards the National League in Ireland, he sanctions the proceedings of the National League, which have for their object to bring to nought and to arrest all the ordinary processes of Government in Ireland. By active declamation, by Parliamentary obstruction, by agitation, by correspondence, he hopes to terrify and alarm Parliament into permitting that great evil of anarchy in Ireland to proceed, and to conquer the resolution of the British people. With one hand, as it were, he adds fuel to the flame in Ireland by his attitude to the National League; and with the other hand, by his attitude in Parliament, he endeavours to cut off the water supply necessary to extinguish the conflagration. This I will say, that more desperate or more unscrupulous strategy to effect a particular political purpose was never yet in the history of England resorted to by a responsible statesman. It may be effective unless the English people are very much on their

guard. I particularly say 'the English people,' because, undoubtedly, upon England the stress of the battle of the Union falls. 'Dear old Scotland,' 'gallant little Wales' 'poor Ireland,' have all wandered from the right fold; but England has maintained by her own strength the Union of the United Kingdom, and the melancholy consequence is that England has to bear the full blast of Mr. Gladstone's fury. There used to be a song some years ago very popular with everyone, every verse of which ended with the sentiment 'I am an Englishman.' But nothing would induce Mr. Gladstone to sing that song now. He would say, 'I am a Scotchman,' 'I am a Welshman,' or even 'I may be an Irishman; but, thank goodness, I am not an Englishman.' Mr. Gladstone is as wrathful against England at the present moment, because England has crossed his path, as he was fifteen years ago with the Pope. Fifteen years ago Mr. Gladstone suspected the Pope of having instigated the Irish Roman Catholic bishops to defeat his project for university education in Ireland. He poured forth upon the devoted head of the Pope a series of pamphlets of a character most alarming to that potentate. He declared at that time—he argued gravely—that no Roman Catholic could be a perfectly loyal subject of the Queen, and he appears to be inclined to argue now that no Englishman can be a loyal subject of the Queen. It is on England that he pours out all his wrath, and he warns the English people that until they consent to the policy of Repeal, they shall enjoy, they shall derive, no benefit from any legislation on any subject, or make any political progress through their Parliament of any sort or kind.

Herein lies a great danger. Mr. Gladstone hopes, and many of his supporters hope, that the democracy of England will grow weary of this struggle. I know that there are people in many parts of the country who are very impatient with the present arrest and block of public business. I can sympathise fully with that impatience. We know that our whole administrative system requires the most careful overhauling. We know that our whole financial system, whether as regards revenue or expenditure on the public service, requires the most thorough examination, searching reform, and re-arrangement.

We know that there are dozens of questions on which legislation is sorely needed by the people at large. We know that there are dozens of projects ripe to be put into practical legislative form. But we can see no prospect of getting to work. Another session has hopelessly gone. The present session is sure to be an Irish session. For all practical purposes it has followed the example of many of its predecessors, and undoubtedly the impatience of the democracy with this state of things is a serious matter. It is a block, a cessation of public business which at once depresses the mind and exasperates it; and Mr. Gladstone takes advantage of this feeling. He intensifies the state of things by his action, and he exasperates it by his words. You may ask me, possibly some of you may say, 'Well, what are we to do?' I have no specific remedy for this evil. I can only preach patience and perseverance, holding on and plodding on. You may depend upon it that the principle of democracy, the principle of government by the many, is now on its trial. Philosophers and historians have written volumes to prove that democracy, or government by the many, is a wayward, capricious, passionate force, on which no reliance can be placed. They have put the question, and they have answered it to their own satisfaction very often in the negative, Can a democracy sustain the burden of a great empire? That question is now being asked of all of you, and it is in your power and in the power of the millions of electors outside this hall and all over the country—it is in your power to give an answer so conclusive in its character that it may remain a monument for all time. But I grant you the trial is very heavy. The purity of the metal of the British democracy is being tried by a searching and infallible test. Many voices call you from the path of duty, of honour, and of safety. Many voices with seductive accents would beguile you along what appears to be a pleasant and an easy and a flowery road—of giving back to Ireland that Parliament which she once possessed, and which at a time of overwhelming national danger was incorporated with your own. 'Ireland blocks the way,' cries Mr. Gladstone. 'Let her go and govern herself; she will trouble you no more; you will be able to attend to your own business. She will be your friend and your warm

ally.' Who, of all our public men, I should like to know, has not felt at times the great and almost overpowering strength of the temptation? Whose mind, of all those engaged in public affairs, has not been exercised and tried by anxious doubts? If we did not examine this question of Home Rule carefully, if we Unionists had not brought to the examination of the question the most unprejudiced and impartial minds, we should not be qualified to discuss it before a great public audience like the present. These great international problems, in which the principles of government, almost the very elements of national and imperial existence, are brought up and analysed and microscopically examined, are not to be solved in the light-hearted, off-hand, sanguine method recommended by Mr. Gladstone and the party of separation. Reflection, knowledge of the past, and a firm determination to look facts in the face—facts as they are, not as you wish them to be—these forces will bring to light gradually, one by one, all the snares and pitfalls and immeasurable dangers which lie hidden under and are concealed by the glittering and gaudy policy of Repeal. Those are the forces which you must bring to bear at this crisis—and I particularly say you, because it is on you the responsibility rests. By the legislation of 1867 and of 1885 this great empire, with all its many interests, and with all its illimitable wealth, was given over absolutely to your management and government. It is yours to keep or yours to squander, yours to strengthen or yours to ruin, yours to hold or yours to throw away. But what strikes me as especially hard on you is this—that within a short time of your succeeding, as it were, to the absolute management of this vast inheritance, a question is sprung upon you suddenly which, from more than one aspect, is perhaps the most difficult and most complicated question which could puzzle or perplex or distract a people. Ireland clamours to be free from your rule and to govern herself. She declares that you have misgoverned her for eighty years, and that you do not understand her or her customs. She supports her demand not only by a pertinacious indulgence in lawlessness, not only by a pertinacious endeavour to paralyse your Parliament and bring all public business to a standstill, but also by a very free and

ingenious use of all those arguments and appeals which are calculated to influence most strongly the minds of a free people, of a people who love freedom, and of a people, moreover, who are constantly animated by a kind of good-natured, easy-going longing for peace and for tranquillity. More than that, your refusal to concede this demand entails upon you the absolute and logical necessity of granting to your Government from time to time, through your Parliament, executive powers which are distinctly beyond the limits of what we English are accustomed to regard as constitutional—powers open to abuse, powers the use of which, unless most carefully watched and guarded, tends to demoralise either a community or an Executive—powers the creation of which a truly Liberal mind naturally finds displeasing and repugnant. You see I am putting the case as fairly and honestly as I can. That is what I may call the sentimental aspect of the Irish question—a very strong aspect, to some minds.

But now I will ask you to consider another view. I will ask you to consider the practical aspect of the Irish question. You would suppose, from the language which is used and the arguments which are put forward by those who advocate the repeal of the Union—you would naturally suppose that Ireland is being treated by Britain as a conquered country, and that the Irish people are being governed as if they were an enslaved people. You would suppose that the Government in Ireland is decidedly despotic, responsible to no one, that every day or every month or every year innocent persons are either hanged or sent to prison for years or for life, that no political freedom of any sort or kind existed there. More than that: you would suppose that the occupiers of soil, the great mass of the peasantry, the cultivators, are ground down and tyrannised over in the most barbarous fashion by every imaginable engine of landlord tyranny and oppression. If that were the case, if there were any portion of truth in that statement of the case of Ireland, I would be a Home Ruler to-morrow. But what are the facts? The Irish people are as free for all practical purposes as you in this town hall. You do not enjoy one bit more of individual freedom than they do under the Constitution. They enjoy the most perfect political equality with you. With them, mind you, no State

Church disturbs the symmetry of religious liberty. With them no interference of any sort or kind by the Government in the exercise of their political rights ever occurs. They have 103 representatives in Parliament—more than they are entitled to by population. These representatives are elected by the great mass of the people just as your own representatives are elected. There is not the smallest official interference by the Government with the freedom of election in Ireland. The elections in Ireland take place under the secrecy and protection of the ballot, and no one interferes with that secrecy or protection unless it be Roman Catholic priests or members of the National League. Any public meeting which has even a semblance of legality can be held in Ireland without interference; any speech, no matter how violent as long as it does not obviously and openly incite to crime, can be delivered without notice by the Government. But, more than that: the Irish peasantry, the cultivators of the soil, are surrounded and protected by an invulnerable, an impregnable wall of legislative fortification, on the strength of which has been concentrated for years all the skill of your most able and experienced public men. More than that: the Irish cultivators, by the free use of British credit and British resources, can transform themselves from occupiers into absolute owners, and they enjoy for that purpose privileges and facilities which, I can tell you, from a Treasury point of view are hardly financially sound, and which hitherto have been denied by Parliament to our own people. Now, this is the position of Ireland. I defy anybody to contradict that statement of the position, or to assert that there is a single word which is contrary to fact in what I have said; and I say that the position of Ireland at the present moment is one of perfect political freedom. I do not know any country in the world, not even America, where political freedom has reached to greater lengths or is contained within larger and broader limits than it is in Ireland. If that is so, what is the position, what is the plea, of the Unionist party? What is the language which we hold to Ireland? We say this: 'We take no credit whatever to ourselves for this state of things, for this political equality. We admit it is your absolute and indefeasible right

under the Act of Union. Further, every morsel, every development of political freedom which we devise for ourselves in the future you shall share in full as you share now. If Ireland has suffered in the past as she has suffered from British ignorance, British neglect, British apathy, we have made amends in recent years, and we will make yet more. There is nothing,' we say, 'which you Irish can reasonably demand either to increase your prosperity or to secure your happiness which we will not do our utmost and our best to accord. Nor will we scrutinise too closely or too narrowly the reasonableness of any of your demands, but for your sakes and for our sakes and for the common interest, and for the sake, and for the safety, and for the honour, and for the power, ay, even for the life of this vast and varied Empire, we ask, and we insist, and we will that you shall live peaceably and amicably with us under one Parliament, one Government, and one Throne.' Now, this is to be remembered: out of a population in Ireland of 4,800,000 people nearer 3,000,000 than 2,000,000 are prepared to respond amicably to that appeal. But there is a section of the Irish people, combined and consolidated and organised into a National League, with its sympathisers and supporters, who make us, the Unionists, this reply. They say, 'We care nothing for your boasted civil and religious liberties. We care nothing for and we do not recognise any of your efforts to increase Irish prosperity or to raise the condition of the Irish people in recent years. We do not recognise them. We will not obey your laws, for they are foreign laws. We will not share in your Parliament, for it is to us an alien Parliament. We will not be governed by your Government. We will have our own Parliament, our own Government, and our own laws, no matter what may be the effect either upon us, or upon you, or upon the Empire at large.' That is their reply, and they say further: 'If you English will not grant us this demand we will carry disorder and destruction into your ancient Parliament; we will ruin Irish society by terror and intimidation; the Queen's courts of justice shall be brought into general contempt and ridicule throughout the land; and crime, outrage, robbery, and wrong—all undetected, all unpunished—shall turn Ireland into a howl-



ing wilderness, and shall make the name and the fame of the British people stink in the nostrils of the nations.' That is the reply of the National League to the demand and the appeal of the Unionist party, and it is with that reply Mr. Gladstone has identified himself. It is to encounter and nullify the effect of that most formidable menace, which with Mr. Gladstone's assistance they at the present moment have some power to carry into effect, that we Unionists call upon the British people to support the Government which is carrying out their decision, to come to the back of the Parliament which they created only a few months ago.

I dare say it will be within your knowledge—though it is a disagreeable remark to have to make—that within the last few years we have gained a very bad character for deserting our friends in moments of difficulty. I have only to remind you of what took place with regard to the evacuation of Afghanistan, with regard to the Transvaal campaign, with regard to the evacuation of the Soudan. I have only to remind you that all these strokes of policy entailed the desertion and the abandonment, in many cases to ruin, of persons who had been faithful to you, who had fought for you, who had made your cause their own. Those are not pleasant memories, they do not raise our character very high; but those memories and those facts, grave and serious as they are, are but as the merest trifles, are but feathers, light as air itself, compared to the unutterable infamy of which you will be guilty if you dream even of abandoning the two million or more loyal subjects of the Queen in Ireland. That would be infamy indeed—infamy black and deep as hell itself; never to be forgotten, never to be forgiven as long as the world rolls on; infamy certain to bring a swift and a speedy retribution. I can have no fear that anything like that will come to pass. It is as well to state plainly the position of public affairs; but, for my own part, I have an immovable and abiding faith in the great and the high qualities of the British democracy. I do not believe that the British democracy is capable of going wrong on any great question for any appreciable length of time. Gentlemen, I said at the opening of my remarks that this is the Jubilee year of the reign of our

gracious Queen. There are many projects before the public, many of them most excellent projects, for commemorating the Jubilee year; but I know of no method which would make this Jubilee year more glorious, more memorable, or more lastingly beneficial to the 300,000,000 subjects of the Queen than that this year should be marked by a renewed determination and by a reiterated national decision that under no temptation, either of momentary advantage or transient profit—under no temptation, however alluring, no matter how eminent may be the man who attempts to beguile you—under no circumstances of any sort or kind will the British democracy consent to dismember the dominions of the Queen or disintegrate her empire. For this purpose all that is required is a free exercise of qualities peculiarly British—common sense, a dogged determination not to be bullied out of the right into the wrong, a love of fair play and common honesty. If these qualities are abundantly displayed, then I have no doubt in my mind that all our present difficulties, great as they seem, will be in no long time surmounted. In a few years we shall wonder at the care and the anxiety which they cost us; and surely in time to come, when all this trouble will be but as ancient history, when many of us who now take part in public affairs will have passed away, among the innumerable legions of your sons and of your grandsons there will be none to doubt or to deny that those were right and those were wise who, by the breadth of their policy and the liberality of their laws, confided freely and without misgiving to the British democracy the government and the guardianship of the United Kingdom.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN IRELAND.

NOTTINGHAM, APRIL 19, 1887.

[In spite of continued attacks upon Lord Randolph Churchill by many who had previously avowed their adherence to his opinions, his popularity was unabated, as the meeting at which the following speech was delivered helped to prove. The streets of Nottingham were almost impassable long before his arrival in the town, and the 'Times' records that 'the entire route was lined with people, the procession being received with continuous and hearty cheers.' The speech, delivered in the Albert Hall, was mainly devoted to the Irish question, and it is given here in an abridged form.]

YOUR chairman, Mr. Rolleston, has congratulated you upon this meeting as a sign—an encouraging sign—of the strength of the Unionist party in Nottingham, and your chairman made a remark in connection with that subject to which I will allude. He said that the Tory party in Nottingham had not been too much flattered by the constant attention of the leaders of the Tory party. That is probably the reason you are so strong. You have not been dry-nursed into power. You have grown of your own strength, and I particularly sympathise with your condition, because, in a way, your position is much my own. Any little political success which in former years I have been able to obtain was certainly not derived from having been in any way pampered or flattered by too constant attention from the leaders of the Tory party. I have known many places and towns in England which have been pampered and flattered by constant attention from the leaders of the Tory party, where the party itself does not possess anything like so much popular strength as you possess at the present day in Nottingham.

Therefore I hope you will not make any such complaint, or look upon yourself as injured or damaged because up to the present moment no great Tory statesmen or Ministers have been among you.

[After some remarks on the pamphlet 'Parnellism and Crime,' the speaker proceeded to consider the position of the Irish question.]

The party with which you have to deal in Ireland is a revolutionary party. It is no new contest which you have to face. This party has existed for many generations in Ireland, and it is the same party to-day, so far as regards its principles and object, as it has ever been. Its principles are undying and remorseless hatred of British rule in Ireland. Its object is the total separation of Ireland from Great Britain, and the placing of Ireland under the protection of a foreign Power. At the end of the last century this party existed in Ireland in great strength. Owing to its action the French invaded Ireland at the end of the last century. They were commanded by one of the most brilliant French generals. A small force of French troops landed and defeated the troops of the Irish Parliament; and if it had not been for the failure of the French to support the troops that had landed, and the failure of the Irish revolutionary party to act up to their professions, it is possible that Ireland at this moment might have been a French province. This revolutionary party in 1798 broke out into open rebellion against the Irish Parliament, and the Irish Parliament was only able to suppress the rebellion by the aid of British troops. Ten thousand British troops were lent by the British Parliament to the Irish Parliament, and the rebellion was put down. That Rebellion produced the Union. The Irish Parliament and the Irish Government proved with regard to the French invasion and the rebellion of 1798 that it was utterly impotent to preserve either the internal order or the external security of Ireland, and consequently Mr. Pitt constructed and concluded the Union between the two countries, and the Irish Parliament and the Irish Government were incorporated and united with the English Parliament and English Govern-

ment in consequence of those great historical facts, and of the great danger which your forefathers passed through at that time. It is a great mistake to say that the Irish Parliament has ceased to exist: it has not. The Irish Parliament exists at the present moment, only it exists in the bosom of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The principle of the Act of Union was this: that by incorporating the Irish Parliament into the British Parliament you added to the authority of the Irish Government and the Irish Parliament the whole weight, the whole resources, and the whole irresistible might of Britain. By the Act of Union your forefathers constructed, as it were, a great barrier and a great fortification against the attempts and the attacks of the revolutionary party in Ireland. That was the Act of Union. On several occasions since the year 1800 the Irish revolutionary party—the same party as to-day—have made desperate attempts to capture and to overthrow that fortification. In 1806, in 1833, and in 1848, and again in 1866, they made desperate efforts to overthrow that fortification. But on these occasions the Imperial Parliament came to the aid of the Irish Government, and thus the Irish Government was able to cope with these outbreaks and to suppress those attempts. There never perhaps was a more dangerous movement against Imperial authority in Ireland than the Fenian movement of 1866. The Fenian movement of 1866 was a popular movement in Ireland. Its ramifications penetrated into every class of society. The shopkeepers in the town, soldiers in the army, servants in the houses of the gentry, even some of the upper classes and some of the respectable middle classes, took part in or sympathised with the Fenian movement. But owing to the might and the determination of the Imperial Parliament that movement was put down. In 1880, after Ireland had been at peace for many years, after a great period of progress towards prosperity, the revolutionary party set to work again, and the revolutionary party of Ireland this time acquired great popular strength by identifying themselves with an assault upon the payment of rent in Ireland, and that policy was aided by the failure of crops in 1879–80, which

in parts of Ireland resulted almost in famine. They acquired great strength by identifying themselves with a resistance to the fulfilment of contracts and legal obligations. They also acquired great Parliamentary strength by the extension of the Irish franchise in 1884. Now, I wish to direct attention to this. I know no instance, though I search all history—I can find no instance more striking of national magnanimity or national generosity than the treatment of Ireland upon that question of the franchise by the Imperial Parliament in 1884. There was not a man in the House of Commons in 1884 who did not know that that extension of the franchise would throw almost the whole Parliamentary representation of Ireland into the hands of the Repeal party. There was not one of us who did not know it, and who was not prepared and was not calculating upon immense Parliamentary and national difficulties in consequence of it. Did that prevent us from doing that which we believed to be justice to Ireland? It did not. The Imperial Parliament held that equal laws were the basis of the Union, and that the Irish should enjoy the same political privileges as the British. They ran all those risks; they deliberately, and with their eyes open, incurred those dangers, so that the Irish people might not have it in their power to say, ‘You British possess greater political freedom than we possess.’ I want you to bear in mind that fact when our Parliament and our system of government in Ireland are assailed as despotic, as irresponsible, as cruel, and barbarous. You have only to bear in mind that fact and to state that fact to dissipate at once accusations of that kind.

We have again a desperate attempt made by the revolutionary party, which has acquired popular strength and Parliamentary strength, in the manner which I have described, to overthrow and capture the great fortification of the Union. On this occasion the means of resistance open to the Unionists are not so effective as they have been on former occasions. We have traitors in and deserters from the Unionist camp. The Imperial Parliament, so far as Great Britain is concerned, is no longer united in resistance to the revolutionary party in Ireland.

Since the year 1841 Mr. Gladstone has been continuously in Parliament, and frequently in office. He has been during that period, from 1841 to 1886, about twenty-six or twenty-seven years in office as a Minister of the Crown. During that time he has held high office, Cabinet office, and has been Prime Minister for a considerable term of years. During all that time, from 1841 to 1886, whether in or out of office, Mr. Gladstone has steadily and unwaveringly resisted the revolutionary party in Ireland. He has resisted it by force—by sheer, unadulterated, undiluted force—on several occasions. He has resisted them also by endeavouring to remove any popular grievance which might add to the strength in Ireland of the revolutionary party. It is a very difficult calculation to estimate how many persons in Ireland and out of Ireland, members of that revolutionary party, have been either executed on the scaffold or sent to prison to penal servitude for life, or for terms of years, or otherwise punished, mainly, if not entirely, owing to the leading and the guiding attitude of resistance to the revolutionary party which Mr. Gladstone has during forty-five years maintained. I own that I do not envy Mr. Gladstone his feelings on that subject. He now acknowledges that the claims of the Irish revolutionary party are just and must be conceded. Surely, when he makes this acknowledgment, he must think to himself of the number of persons whose lives he has contributed to sacrifice and whose liberty he has contributed to take away because they tried to impress upon the Imperial Parliament the same conclusions which he is now impressing upon them. I say that must be an unpleasant reflection for Mr. Gladstone at his time of life. Up to the year 1886—up to January 1886—the Unionist party, which we represent here to-day in this hall, comprised all sections of English political opinion without exception—Tories, Whigs, Radicals—all of them devoted, however great their differences may be on other matters, to this great principle of the maintenance of the Union—that is to say, the maintenance of one Parliament for the three kingdoms. The Unionist party still comprises representatives of all shades of English political opinion. Within the ranks of the Unionists there fight Tories,

Whigs, and Radicals ; but, unfortunately, there has been a great defection ; a large section of the Radical party and a considerable section of the Liberal party have deserted the Unionist standard and gone over to the enemy and joined the ranks of the revolutionary party. Mr. Gladstone has now deserted his former standard, and implores Parliament and the people no longer to struggle with this party in Ireland, but to make a complete surrender and give over the government of Ireland into their hands. Mr. Gladstone and his party now declare, in contradiction to everything they have said in former years, that the Imperial Parliament is unable to govern Ireland ; that the British people are unable to preserve their connection with Ireland and to maintain their authority there. What we have to do is to show that we can govern Ireland. We have to prove to the English people and to Mr. Gladstone and his followers that they are wrong in their conclusion ; that the strength and the resolution of Britain are as great as ever they were, and that we are perfectly able, of our own skill, of our own intelligence, of our own sense of justice, and of our own resolution to govern Ireland peacefully and thus lead her to prosperity. That is what we have now to try and prove. That is what the Government are trying to prove by asking Parliament to sanction the measure they have laid before it. If we fail, then undoubtedly the revolutionary party will win the day. We cannot afford to lose this battle. We cannot afford to give up an advantage. If we cannot restore order in Ireland, if we cannot restore the authority of the law and give to the individual Irishman security for life and property, then undoubtedly we shall have to make way for the revolutionary party, and we shall have to say to them, ' You do for Ireland what we have failed to do.' But we are trying to avoid that conclusion. And for that purpose we must strike strongly and speedily at crime and at outrage in Ireland.

It is perfectly evident that on this question of Home Rule the Liberal party will never again be united. Till they are united it is perfectly impossible for Mr. Gladstone to carry his policy to a successful issue, and on this policy of Repeal they will never



be united unless this Government fails to effect their purpose of restoring order in Ireland and fails to carry out the high mission with which the constituencies intrusted them. Of this you may be sure—that if the Government and the Unionist party succeed, as I believe they will succeed, in restoring order, in giving back tranquillity to Ireland, and if they are successful in perpetuating in a practical manner the Union between the two countries, the people of this country will continue to give to the Unionist party their overwhelming support. They will do it for this reason—one of the greatest and most sensible motives of action—on the ground that nothing succeeds like success; and you may depend upon it that if Mr. Gladstone and his followers sustain once more such a defeat as they sustained at the last general election—if another general election comes upon them and is as disastrous to them as the last—you may depend upon it that they, or what remains of them, will be uncommonly sick of Home Rule, uncommonly sick of their policy of Repeal, and will begin to turn over in their minds seriously whether there is any chance of their obtaining any influence with Parliament or with the country, unless they abandon and repudiate altogether the policy of the Repeal of the Union. Therefore we may be confident that if we can only pull through this crisis, on the whole a good time lies before us. But what we have got to do is to pull through. No doubt we have many difficulties before us. We shall have most protracted and wearisome debates in Parliament; we shall have, very likely, most unpleasant and painful scenes in the House of Commons; we shall have a neglect and laying aside of English and Scotch business; we shall have from Mr. Gladstone and his followers every kind of appeal to all the influences of terror, cowardice, and desperation. That is what we have got to face, but we must not mind; we must struggle on, because the Union is worth struggling for. The Union is the life of the British Empire, and it is worth fighting for. To maintain the unity of the empire of the United States, the Northern Americans fought a bloody civil war for four years. They went through every privation, every danger, every sacrifice which a State

could go through, and for four years that great continent was traversed and harassed by contending armies; but they were successful. They preserved the union of the United States; and see how illimitable the power of the United States is at present. We have not come to such a pass as that. We are not nearly so badly off as they were, and nothing will induce me to believe that the Union Jack and all it symbolises is less precious to a Briton than the Stars and Stripes to the American.

## NATIONAL EXPENDITURE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 21, 1887.

[The chief feature of Mr. Goschen's first Budget, in 1887, was the manufacture of a fictitious surplus by the partial suspension of the Sinking Fund—a contrivance which astonished many persons who had confidently looked forward to some great and original stroke of genius, and who were disappointed at finding nothing more than an expedient for raising money which has been condemned by all great financiers, unless under pressure of the sternest necessity. This Budget was criticised by Lord Randolph Churchill in two speeches, the material parts of which are here given.]

THE estimated surplus of revenue over expenditure for the coming year is something like 700,000*l.*, which is greatly due to the reductions which were made in the estimated Navy expenditure before I left the Government, and in that of the Army which have been made since. I pass to a matter that interests me more than any other, but which I am not able to deal with at the present moment, and with regard to which I cannot take the strong line of action which I should have been disposed to take on account of the vital issue which is now before Parliament and the country. After listening to the right honourable gentleman to-night for some three hours it is with sincere and real regret that I have come to the conclusion that he has not said one word on the subject of economy and retrenchment. I regret the fact for many reasons. I regret it on account of the importance of the question itself, and I regret it on account of the position of the right honourable gentleman himself. Never did a Chancellor of the Exchequer join a Government more capable, more qualified, or more powerful to deal with such a question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer came into the Government not only with a great and justly deserved financial reputation, but in such a way that

on the question of retrenchment he had only to say, *Sic volo, sic jubeo*, for the Government could not have afforded to quarrel with another Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now, what is the state of the case? The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to review with much more care the Civil Service Estimates than the Army and Navy Estimates, and to suggest that a reduction might be made in that quarter more effectually than in the Army and Navy. I disagree entirely with that view. I believe that there are reductions possible in the Civil Service Estimates, but I should not put the amount at very much more than 250,000*l.* All I want is that the State shall get full value for its money. I now come to the Army and Navy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, I much regret to say, did not take up the view which I took up. What I found was this—that between 1883 and 1885 there was a total gross increase in the average annual expenditure on the Army and Navy of no less than six millions of money. The Chancellor of the Exchequer never alluded to that increase. All he alluded to was the increase on the Army and Navy which was due to what he called the ‘naval scare’ of 1884, but the increase of expenditure due to the scare does not account for the large annual increase of six millions, nor for half of it. The ‘naval scare’ accounted for an increase last year and this year of about 2,700,000*l.* You cannot put it higher than that, leaving 3,300,000*l.* unaccounted for. That is the point to which I should like to draw attention. I want to know what are the circumstances, domestic or foreign, which have caused you to increase the cost of your army and navy since 1883 by the sum of 3,000,000*l.* That is the point on which I should like to have the Chancellor’s opinion. It is no use the Chancellor of the Exchequer lecturing the House about the Civil Service Estimates; what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has got to do is this—if he believes an increase of expenditure to be necessary in a great department, he has got to place that upon the taxes of the country. If he places it on the taxes, and the taxes are raised, then the great body of the tax-payers will begin to feel the pinch, and will put pressure upon their members to reduce expenditure; and the moment they feel the necessity of being economical then Parliament will cease to make

proposals for fresh expenditure to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But so long as he does not put the increase of expenditure on the taxes of the country, but continues by one financial method or another to conceal it from the country, so long will he be able to accuse Parliament of increasing the cost of the public service. It is from the Chancellor of the Exchequer alone that reduction must come. That is the only way in which you will have retrenchment. I am told that economy is very unpopular—that the people like a strong army and a large navy, coaling stations and fortifications. Then, I say, Test it; place it on the taxation. There is a gross annual increase on the army and navy, as I have explained. Has the Chancellor placed that on the taxes? He has not. He has manufactured a surplus by reducing the provision for the repayment of the capital of the National Debt. I cannot believe it is his Budget—nothing will induce me to believe it. It has been made for him partly by general political circumstances and partly by the persuasions, I will not call them prejudices, of the colleagues with whom he has to deal. In not placing the increase in armaments on the general tax-payers of the country, I say he has injured the cause of economy and retrenchment. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has dealt with the provision for the reduction of National Debt. On that subject I want to say that I believe that large operations are possible and desirable with regard to our present arrangements for the repayment of the National Debt; but I wish to point out that the six millions annually devoted to the National Debt is a tremendous financial reserve. It is a great weapon, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to guard as the apple of his eye, to use only in cases of emergency. What I protest against is taking from the fund for repayment of the National Debt and applying money so taken in order to meet your increased expenditure on armaments which, if they are justified or desired by the country, ought to be placed upon the taxes. That is a point on which I feel most strongly. I venture to tell the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the plan he has chosen is a most unfortunate one. I regret more than I can say that this great principle of the repayment of the National Debt has been interfered with for so light, so trivial,

and so unsound a cause. I regret that a great weapon has been tampered with, blunted, and spoiled for future use. I do not know whether it is possible for the right honourable gentleman to reconsider his proposals ; but whether he does so or not, I am certain that they violate all the financial principles in which he has been trained, which he has proclaimed, and which he hoped when he got into office to impress on Parliament and on the country.

## ECONOMICAL 'FEROCITY.'

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 25, 1887.

I DESIRE to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer amicably, but pointedly, what are his views on the subject of economy and retrenchment in the public expenditure? Let him tell the House fairly and frankly whether he is of opinion that the views which I have expressed as to the possibility and the desirability and the necessity of retrenchment are views in which he does not concur, or views in which he honestly concurs, and which he will use his great power and influence to give effect to. In 1885 the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not agree with the gentlemen among whom he now sits. He was an independent supporter of the right honourable gentleman opposite, and in those days he placed himself on a high pinnacle of political honesty. He said that he was not going to delude or to humbug the democracy, but would tell them the truth upon all subjects, whether they liked it or not; and it is within my recollection that from that pinnacle which he occupied in 1885 he looked down on such unfortunate mortals as the present Prime Minister, and such still more unfortunate individuals as myself. His speeches at that time showed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had very little confidence in us, which was very painful to me, and possibly also to the Prime Minister. The right honourable gentleman will not go back from what he said in Edinburgh in 1885. His words were not intended as mere phrases, but were *bonâ fide*, honest expressions of political opinion which he would be ready to give effect to if he came into office. I ask the House to allow me to read a few extracts from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speeches on this question of retrenchment. The principles of economy are just as

much concerned in the manner by which you raise revenue as they are concerned in the manner by which you spend revenue. We must be economical not only in the way we expend but in the way we raise money. I have here ten extracts, but I will not read them all. I will have mercy on the House. I take the third, which is very remarkable. In a speech which he made on October 21, 1885, at Hendon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer used these words: 'The Conservatives hold that such men as Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Mr. Childers, and others of that stamp, are going to betray the traditions of which they are the heirs—that they are going to throw over Gladstonian finance, Gladstonian views of economy, and, more than that, of national retrenchment. I call that an offensive view, to which I never will subscribe.' Now, sir, I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he rises to reply, to show the House how this method of dealing with the sinking fund for this particular purpose is in accordance with Gladstonian finance, Gladstonian economy, Gladstonian views as to national expenditure, and, more than that, Gladstonian views of national retrenchment. But I take another passage. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said: 'The Liberal party have been, and, I trust, always will be, the guardians of the public purse—guardians willing even to incur some amount of unpopularity rather than be the ruthless spendthrifts of the national resources placed in their hands.' He then went on to make a comparison drawn from private life. He proceeded: 'Although there may be public administrators of whom it may be said, "There is no niggardly economy there—they spend their money like gentlemen," why do they not remember at every point that the money which they spend comes from the taxation of the people?' These sentiments are, I think, not wholly dissimilar from those which I humbly expressed at the time when I left the Government. I come now to the last quotation with which I shall trouble the House. The right honourable gentleman, speaking on November 24 at Edinburgh, said: 'Let me pass from legislative proposals to some matters of importance with regard to the administration of the country. One great point is that of national expenditure and national economy, which is becoming



rapidly less popular than it used to be. I confess that I cannot see in certain candidates for Parliamentary honours any sign that they will be ferocious guardians of the public purse. Believe me, some little ferocity is necessary.' I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he rises to defend his proposal, and when he remembers these words that he has spoken, how he can prove that he has been a guardian of the public purse, willing even to incur some unpopularity—I ask him to show how the proposal which he now makes in regard to the debt, and the absence from his Budget of provisions as to retrenchment, are consistent with the pledge which he gave to the people of Edinburgh, that he would be a zealous and ferocious guardian of the public revenue.

I have prefaced my observations with these quotations, because I had felt until last Thursday night that, at any rate on the question of economy, I had a warm ally and a true supporter in the right honourable gentleman. But what is the effect on economy of his proposal? I imagine that the right honourable gentleman will not deny that an essential part of an economical policy must be the laying aside of money to repay debt. But if, for the particular purpose of making a popular remission of taxation, you withdraw from the provision which former Governments have made for the repayment of debt, how can you argue that you are pursuing a truly economical policy? Surely the effect of this proposed remission of taxation, which is the purpose for which he withdraws 2,000,000*l.* from the fund for the repayment of debt—the effect of that remission on the public mind must be that people will think and say there is no great embarrassment caused by our present heavy public expenditure, nor can there be any real inefficiency in the public departments. Obviously, the stir made by myself and others about the expenditure, the increase of the expenditure, and departmental inefficiency was wholly uncalled for; there can be nothing of the kind, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer this year is able to remit one penny of the income-tax, to remit 600,000*l.* of the tobacco duty, and to grant 330,000*l.* in aid of local rates. That must be the effect on the public mind. The public mind has been brought with the greatest difficulty to bear on this

question of public expenditure. The public were perfectly ready to place confidence in the Government; nor did I do anything whatever to prevent any portion of the public from placing confidence in the Government on that point. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer has dashed all my hopes on that subject. I am certain that the feeling on the part of the large mass of the people in consequence of this Budget is likely to be that the stir which has been made about high expenditure is a matter with which they need not much concern themselves, and they will feel that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to make so large a remission of taxation they need not trouble themselves about anything else. I wish to ask the right honourable gentleman, are those his views and wishes? Is that the frame of mind in which he made these speeches in 1885? Is it a frame of mind that will bring credit on this House, and especially on the Conservative party—a frame of mind of carelessness and almost of recklessness as to the progress of public expenditure? The members of the House of Commons are often blamed for their extravagant tendencies, but I repudiate the accusation. I assert that the House of Commons cannot be economical unless the Government of the day is economical. All the great expenditure in the past has been because the Government led the way. When the Government has a character for thrift, then members refrain from pressing proposals for expenditure, because they know that they have to do with a Government which has a tight hold on the public purse. I say, therefore, that unless the Government leads the way and puts its foot down, it is useless to lay the duty and the responsibility of economy in expenditure on Parliament.

I shall be told that retrenchment is impossible—that there is no great retrenchment possible—and that the increase in the army and navy expenditure is one which the country must bear. Well, all I can say is, go back to former times. In 1860 you had a Government in office determined on a retrenchment policy, and the Army and Navy Estimates, which stood then at twenty-seven and a half millions, were by 1865 reduced to twenty-two and a half millions, or a reduction of five millions in five years. In 1868 the estimates were twenty-five millions,

and by 1871 they had been reduced to twenty-one millions, or a reduction of four millions in three years. What do we find in this year? Since 1883 the average army and navy expenditure has been raised six millions. Does the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer mean to say, in view of the figures of former years, that it is impossible to decrease that expenditure? I challenge him frankly and amicably on that point to say whether large retrenchments are not possible; and I invite him to declare, in view of this state of things, whether he means to contend that the action he has taken now with regard to the present Budget will strengthen his hands. I wish the House to consider itself as a judicial tribunal, without party prejudices on one side or the other, and I wish to put two Chancellors of the Exchequer before them and try their standard of finance. I will put the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the late Government, the member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer before the House and I will ask the House to say frankly which presents the nearest approach to the best standard of financial morality. The circumstances of the two were identical, except that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer was a little more favoured by increase of the revenue. The circumstances of the time are identical. There was no possibility of any great measure of financial reform. The House was occupied last year, and is occupied this, with the Irish question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last year had to meet a large increase of military and naval expenditure; and what was the course he took? There must have been an enormous temptation to make a large remission of taxation. The Government then was advocating a scheme for Ireland which might obviously have been advanced considerably by a popular remission of taxation. Whether the temptation presented itself or not I do not know; but I know this, that, so far from touching the sinking fund, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of last year revived no less than three millions of that fund which had been suspended; and the consequence of his doing that was that he was not able to make any remission of taxation. He told the country fairly, 'I cannot lower the taxation, and you have got to meet it.' Can the Chancellor of the

Exchequer of to-day put his conduct in the same light? He does not maintain the sinking fund; he makes a grab at it. He takes two millions of the sinking fund, and with it he makes a remission of taxation. I know it is pleasant to have a remission of taxation; but what we have to consider is whether that remission may not cost us more than the benefit which we derive. When you embark in unsound finance you pay dearly for it. I have been told that this is a very clever stroke of policy—this remission of taxation. I can only say that the right honourable gentleman was the last person who should interfere with the sinking fund. It is impossible for any one to go into the Treasury and not see that great fund at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made a grab staring him in the face. There is no cleverness in discovering this fund and in manufacturing a surplus. Anybody can do it, and I believe every Chancellor of the Exchequer is tempted to do it. I do not believe there is one who has not longed to make a depredatory raid upon that fund. As has been pointed out, every Chancellor of the Exchequer has hitherto resisted the temptation. No doubt it was interfered with in 1885. The right honourable gentleman opposite<sup>1</sup> in that year had to find fourteen millions of money; of this four and a half millions were taken out of the sinking fund, three millions more were borrowed, and the Government proposed, had they remained in office, to raise the rest by taxation. This is the first time that the fund is resorted to for such a purpose as is now proposed, and I deplore that it should be a Conservative Government which has attempted it; I deeply regret what has been done.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has fallen a victim to a temptation which has strongly assailed every Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which everyone up till now has been strong enough to resist. I do not say that there are not occasions when you may deal with the sinking fund. There may be occasions for large operations. It might be very useful in time of war. You might use it under certain circumstances which I will not describe, but which may be supposed, to carry out large taxation reforms which might excite great opposition,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Childers.

and by using this fund you might allay that opposition and make a beneficial increase to your resources. But there is another use of the sinking fund, and I think the right honourable gentleman<sup>1</sup> alluded to it in his speech last year on the Irish Land Bill. I think he said he would not have proposed so large an operation as the creation of fifty millions of stock if it were not for the enormous power exercised by the Commissioners of the National Debt over Consols. It is not within reasonable probability that the value of Consols would suffer any large depreciation as long as the Commissioners of the National Debt have that great sum of money at their disposal with which to sustain the price of Consols. Here we have a weapon which might be used in connection with Ireland, if English credit is to be resorted to for Irish land legislation, but it is the last weapon in the world that you should seek to weaken, or fall back upon unless for a great purpose. Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer really consider that the remission of one penny in the income-tax is a great purpose? Does he think that he will thereby add appreciably to the prosperity of the country, or for more than a passing moment increase the popularity of the Government? Imagine the effect of the principle he has laid down. If he can do this, what may not any one else do? He came to the Exchequer with the highest reputation. Others before him had a reputation to make. He approached the Treasury with a reputation ready made. He was the orthodox apostle—he was the canonised saint of the financial purists. The financial experts are already mourning over his false economy. Has the right honourable gentleman read the article in the 'Economist' on his Budget? When he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, I remember that the 'Economist' said, 'Well, thank God that at last we have got a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that, having gone over every kind of financial impostor,' including my unfortunate self, 'we have at last got a recognised financial genius.' I will read a short passage from the 'Economist.' It says: 'But Mr. Goschen does not intend to leave the present arrangements unaltered, and the chief alteration he proposes is one which, coming from him, we regard with the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone.

greatest regret and disappointment. He wishes to lay violent hands upon the debt sinking fund and appropriate no less than 2,000,000*l.* of the amount we now devote each year to the redemption of the debt. As we show elsewhere, the excuse he offers for this is of the flimsiest kind, and it should take arguments far more cogent than he has yet advanced, or will, in our opinion, be able to advance, to induce Parliament to reverse the policy which in this matter it has deliberately adopted.' What has the Chancellor of the Exchequer got to say to that? The 'Economist' concludes: 'Altogether, then, Mr. Goschen's Budget is, though clever, very far indeed from satisfactory, and it is weak just where we should have expected to find the strength of so able a financier most conspicuously displayed.' I have no reason to feel any great respect for the 'Economist.' It never gave me any credit for financial ability; and I only quote it as an authority which had told us that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would lead us in courses of financial rectitude and purity, and which now tells us he has done the reverse.

The Committee may think I have spoken too strongly on these matters. I cannot help feeling strongly, because I feel that all those hopes I had entertained that the Tory party would have taken up and would have identified themselves with a policy of sound finance, economy, and retrenchment are shattered. We had an immense opportunity for placing before the country in the financial proposals of the year our adherence to a policy of economy and retrenchment. We are now going to plunge into the Irish question, with which many weeks will be occupied, and financial matters are not likely to come before us again for a considerable time. A golden opportunity for showing the country what our policy was has been lost. The Government have been unfortunately tempted, unless there is a glimmer of hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer may reconsider his proposals, to court a little popularity which they did not in the least require. They are strong enough, in all conscience, on the question of the Union. Apparently, to court a little popularity, under the impression that they are weak, they are tempted to make a remission of taxation which in reality will benefit no one, and which will inflict a fatal blow

upon financial arrangements for paying off the debt built up by both parties in the House, through Parliament after Parliament : upon a continuous policy which has been added to by one party after another, and which has never been interfered with except in times of emergency. Now we are deliberately identifying ourselves with the policy of ceasing to pay off the National Debt. I would ask the Government whether it is not possible to reconsider that particular proposal. It is not necessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to touch the sinking fund. He has ample resources at his disposal. If he leaves the sinking fund alone and remits a penny of income tax, he will still have a balance of 400,000*l.* If he does not reduce the income tax, and prefers to take off the tobacco duty, he will have a balance of 800,000*l.* If he touches neither of these, and confines himself to a relief of the rates, he will have a balance of 900,000*l.* He can do any of these things if he will only leave the sinking fund alone ; and he is touching it for a purpose so paltry and so frivolous that I fail to understand for one moment how it ever entered into his mind, and how the right honourable gentlemen near him, and particularly the First Lord of the Treasury, fell into his policy. I beg the Chancellor of the Exchequer to believe that I only make these remarks because of my intense and earnest desire that the present Government, whose career, I hope, is going to be a long one, may enter upon and may continue in the path of financial stability.

DEPARTMENTAL EXTRAVAGANCE AND  
MISMANAGEMENT.

WOLVERHAMPTON, JUNE 3, 1887.

[In this speech a large number of facts were brought together in illustration of the system under which the Army and Navy are managed, and against which Lord Randolph Churchill had protested in vain. These facts were all drawn from the evidence and reports of Royal Commissioners or Parliamentary Committees, and they remain as unassailable now as they were when first brought to the notice of the public. But the speech was attacked on the ground of its 'exaggerated' statements, although not a single statement could be disproved. Great alarm, however, was excited in certain influential quarters by that part of the speech in which Lord Randolph declared that he had a plan of reform ready which involved sweeping changes in the War Office and the Admiralty. After that intimation it was clearly perceived by men who understood the forces which were at work behind the scenes that Lord Randolph would not be afforded an opportunity of carrying out his design. It became more than ever an object of solicitude with this class to banish him from office, and to place all his actions before the public in the most unfavourable light. The system attacked was far too powerful to yield without a prolonged struggle, the end of which has not yet come.]

I KNOW that there are many here who must be largely engaged in the carrying on of practical business, and are excellent judges as to the manner in which business ought to be conducted, and I am going to address you in your character as men of business, representing, as you do, very faithfully and very directly, an immense portion of the British people. I am going to address you on what I consider a great subject, the expenditure of public money. This is a very large meeting. I suppose there must be some 4,000 or more gathered together in this hall.



I wonder how many of you have the smallest idea as to how the money you pay in taxes goes? I do not propose to occupy your time with the expenditure of public money which is incurred in the Civil Service. I think that there is room for great vigilance, considerable reform, and no inconsiderable reduction in the expenditure of public money connected with the Civil Service of this country. But I see in that expenditure, after having studied it pretty closely, no glaring or profligate extravagance such as I shall have to bring under your notice. I recognise that the democracy of Britain is continually making fresh demands on the State, that the democracy expects the State to perform duties which in former days the State was allowed to leave to private enterprise, and I recognise that the tendency of modern social reform must tend to check any hopes of large decrease in our civil expenditure. No, gentlemen; what I am going to talk to you about to-night is the expenditure on the British Army and the British Navy. I tell you what decided me finally that no time should be lost in speaking out on this subject. I read the other day a speech made by Lord Wolseley with regard to the condition of the Army, and I entreat your attention to this extract. Lord Wolseley used these words. He said: 'The Army authorities asked for requisites for the Army, and they were told that they must economise in some way to get them. If guns were asked for, then the reply came that the fighting men must be reduced, or, under the same conditions, carts and horses, which were necessary for the Army, would not be supplied. If the country went on longer in this way knocking off cavalry and artillery whenever increased expenditure was required, the Army would soon be reduced to two men and a boy.' That is the statement of Lord Wolseley, who occupies the position of Adjutant-General, and is a great authority. I will tell you exactly what the facts are with regard to the numerical strength of your Army and Navy.

I will go back to the year 1875, and I will tell you why that is a very good year on which to base a comparative estimate of public expenditure. Mr. Disraeli's Government was in office, and Mr. Disraeli's Government and the party who

followed them had been of opinion through many of the preceding years that the Liberal Government which had preceded them had starved the services and reduced our Army and Navy dangerously. They came into power in 1874, and you may take the estimates of the year 1875 as representing what, in the opinion of Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues, was necessary for the safety of the empire. Now, in the year 1875,<sup>1</sup> the cost of our Army was 14,500,000*l.* and the cost of our Navy was 10,900,000*l.*—altogether making a total of 25,400,000*l.* That is the sum which Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues thought necessary to provide for the armaments of the country. In the present year the estimates for the Army are 18,300,000*l.*, and for the Navy 12,500,000*l.*, making together 30,800,000*l.* So that we have an increased expenditure on Army and Navy purposes over what Mr. Disraeli thought necessary for the safety of the country of 5,400,000*l.* Now, I want to tell you what has happened to the Army numerically since 1875. The Regular soldiers were in that year 129,000, and in 1887 they are 141,000 men; so we have had an increase of 12,000 men in the Regular Army. In 1875 the Militia was 116,000 men; in 1887 they number 119,000 men, an increase of 3,000 men in the Militia. In 1875 the number of efficient Volunteers was 168,000; in 1887 they number 218,000. So we have had an increase of 50,000 to the efficient strength of the Volunteers. The Army Reserve in 1875 was 30,000; in 1887 it is 57,000 men, and therefore we have an increase of 27,000 men in the Army Reserve. But in addition to that we have the Indian Army, and our forces there have been increased by 10,000 British and 30,000 native troops; so that if I take Lord Wolseley's statement of the Army being reduced to two men and a boy and test it by figures, I find that the British force has been increased, in one way or another, by 92,000, and the whole force of the British Empire by 132,000 men. Now, Lord Wolseley, a man in position, an authority, has, in the face of facts like these, come before the British public and alleged that, owing

<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from the Estimates and Statistical Abstract for 1875, and from the Estimates for 1887-88, and the Official Statement of the Secretary of State for War.

to the action of the Treasury and of Parliament, our Army is being reduced to two men and a boy.

I pass from that to other matters of more importance. I have shown how there has been the large increase of nearly four millions in the cost of our Army since 1875. What I want to bring before you is that this large increase of expenditure is not accounted for by the numerical increase of strength I have demonstrated. That numerical increase of strength only accounts for some 700,000*l.* of additional expenditure, if we take the estimates for food, pay, clothing and transport charges of the Army. Just in the same way with the British Navy, the increase of the cost of the Navy is 1,600,000*l.* over what it was in 1875, and our Navy is much the same in numerical strength of ships and sailors now as in 1875, although we have an increased cost. In 1875 we had 60,000 sailors; in 1887 we have 62,000, an increase of 2,000. In 1875 we had 168 steamships and 40 sailing ships in commission; in 1887 we have 164 steamships and 44 sailing ships in commission, practically much the same; and yet we have an increased cost of nearly 2,000,000*l.* to bear. If I examine the Navy estimates for pay, food, and clothing, I find the increase of 2,000 men only accounts for some 200,000*l.* of the increased cost. The increased cost of the Army and Navy is not accounted for by the numerical increase, further than by some 900,000*l.* out of 5,000,000*l.* I hope I have made that clear.

I will now ask your attention for a moment to a comparison of the military strength of the British Empire and the military strength of the French and German Empires, the two great empires of the continent of Europe, and the expenditure of the British Empire and the expenditure of those two great empires on military and naval armaments. The empire of Germany spends 21,000,000*l.* annually as ordinary expenditure on army and navy purposes. The French Republic spends 29,000,000*l.* annually as ordinary naval and military expenditure. The United Kingdom, our own country, has reached an ordinary naval and military expenditure of 31,000,000*l.* Therefore, you see, we spend 10,000,000*l.* more than Germany on military and naval purposes, and 2,000,000*l.* more than France.

But it would not be a fair comparison if we did not take into account the whole military expenditure of the British Empire, and for that purpose we must take the Indian expenditure, because we have identified the Indian military resources with our own resources at home, and on two occasions when it was necessary to make a great military display we have brought Indian troops to the scene of the struggle and incorporated them with our own troops. Therefore I am bound to add to our Imperial expenditure the expenditure which India is called upon to bear. India pays nearly 20,000,000*l.* annually for the Indian army. Now, what have we got to in the way of comparative expenditure. Germany expends 21,000,000*l.* on army and navy purposes, France 29,000,000*l.*, and the British Empire 51,000,000*l.* Let us see what these empires can respectively do for their expenditure. Germany for the expenditure of 21,000,000*l.* can put into the field one and a half million armed men, and that does not include her enormous reserves. France can do much the same for her expenditure of 29,000,000*l.* a year. She can put into the field one and a half million of armed men; and mark this: the German and French fortresses are all of them fully provisioned and adequately armed. The German and the French troops are armed with the best artillery, the best rifles, the best weapons of every sort. The transport of the French army and the German army is most perfect, and their stores of ammunition and all munitions of war are full to overflowing. That is what they can do for their money. Let us see what the British Empire can do for an expenditure of 51,000,000*l.* I suppose—though I believe military men will contest this—still I suppose that, if we went to war or had to defend ourselves, we might, after maddening delay, after pouring out money like water, possibly put in the field and maintain 150,000 British soldiers. We could not do more. We have many fortresses in the United Kingdom and in the British Empire, and many strong places, places of strategic importance. We have not one single fortress that is properly or adequately armed. We have not one single fortress that is properly provisioned. We have a great many strong strategic places which are perfectly unarmed and perfectly unprovisioned, notwithstanding all our

great expenditure. I will take the great fortress of Malta, in the Mediterranean, and I say that Malta is insufficiently and inadequately armed. It is not sufficiently provisioned to support a garrison for three weeks. We have not one single heavy gun in reserve, not one of any sort or kind. We have not any reserve whatever of heavy projectiles for heavy guns. Our horse artillery, of which the British nation are so proud, is armed with what Lord Wolseley has described as the worst gun in Europe. Our field artillery is armed with a gun so inferior that it is to be replaced, and a new field artillery gun is being manufactured. But if we went to war to-morrow it would be armed with a most inferior weapon. Our British infantry, which was said to be the best in the world, is armed with rifles which have been proved in action to be defective, and of inferior description, while the bayonets bend and twist when strain is put upon them. Our cavalry are armed with swords of equally bad manufacture. This has all been proved; it is on record. Our sailors are armed with cutlasses of the same worthless description, and this is a fact—that though at any moment we may be called upon to defend the empire, and put our army of 150,000 in the field, in spite of our vast expenditure on our home establishments of thirty-one millions, we have not got land transport for 20,000 men. That is our military and naval condition.

Let me for one moment make a digression as to foreign policy. If that is our military and naval position—and I defy any one to contradict it—do you not think it is the most utter and glaring folly to talk about the ascendancy of England in the councils of Europe? Do not you think it is the most utter and glaring folly for a Minister—if there were such a Minister—to dream of resisting the advance of the Russian Empire in the south-east of Europe by military force? If that is our naval and military condition, the Minister who knew that such was the naval and military condition of the country, and adopted a foreign policy such as some apparently advocate, would be a maniac.

The blame for this state of things does not rest upon the British people, and it does not rest upon the House of

Commons. The blame for it rests upon the system of our naval and military administrations, upon our naval and military departments; the blame lies upon those who uphold that system, and who are responsible for it. Year after year, millions have been steadily voted by Parliament for the support of the Army and Navy. The House of Commons has nerve refused, on a single occasion, to vote whatever the Minister demanded. We have had not only the annual estimates: we have had since 1875 two enormous votes of credit. Everything that has been asked for by the Minister has been given. Successive Secretaries of State, successive Lords of the Admiralty, have solemnly assured Parliament that, in voting these millions, they were voting all that was necessary for the efficient defence of the country; and yet, what I have said to you to-night with reference to the naval and military condition of the empire is absolutely true. That being so, perhaps some of you will understand the sort of system of public expenditure against which I dashed myself, and with which I utterly refused to be connected either for a day or for an hour longer than I could help, either as Minister or as Chancellor of the Exchequer. I had confidence in the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War. I thought they were men of energy, and that if I put pressure upon them, by refusing to grant the increased means they demanded, I thought they, acting under that pressure, would come to the determination to reform and revolutionise that rotten system of expenditure of public money. That was my hope. You may say my way of going to work was a rough-and-ready one. So it was, but it was my only way. I was only Chancellor of the Exchequer: I was not First Lord of the Admiralty or Secretary of State for War. It was not my business to do their business. What I said was, 'Your system is rotten and profligate. I will not be responsible for giving you increased grants of public money. Reform your system. Make seventeen millions wisely spent do what eighteen millions unwisely spent would not do. Make eleven millions wisely spent do what twelve and a half millions will not do unwisely spent; and having assured me and my colleagues in Parliament of your efforts to establish a sound

system of naval and military expenditure, then, if you must and will, go before Parliament and ask for an increased vote of public money.'

I will now tell you two or three very interesting anecdotes, which will illustrate to you the truth of what I state as to your defenceless and unprepared condition. You will recollect that in 1881, on the morning before the bombardment of Alexandria, the French fleet sailed away from the harbour, and left the English fleet to do the work. The English fleet bombarded Alexandria. During the bombardment the 'Alexandra,' 'Téméraire,' and 'Monarch,' heavy ships of war, fired a certain number of rounds of heavy shell from their eleven-inch guns. What do you think was the condition of these ships after the bombardment? Suppose the French Admiral had returned and said, 'I object to your landing sailors and troops in Egypt, and if you do I will open fire on you;' what do you think was the position and condition of the British sailors on board these ships? They had only got about ten rounds of shell remaining for each of their eleven-inch guns;<sup>1</sup> and what is worse, there was not at that time any reserve whatever of eleven-inch shells for these guns in our great arsenal at Malta! That was the condition of the reserve stores of the English fleet at that time. I will tell you another story even more startling. You remember the expedition to Khartoum. You remember the formation of the desert column which was to cut itself off from its base and to plunge into the desert on what seemed almost a forlorn hope. The life of that column depended upon its being properly equipped. The gallantry of the men was known. All that they wanted was to be properly equipped. Yet, when that column started, and when that column was in action, it was found that a large number of the shells which had been sent out for its artillery were too large for the guns which accompanied the column, and another portion of the shells—the shrapnel shells—had either not been filled or had been imperfectly filled, so that they would

<sup>1</sup> Lord Charles Beresford, speaking at the annual dinner of the Constitutional Union on June 8, 1887, said that 'had they been attacked at Alexandria by the French fleet they would have been in an awkward position, as they had not too much powder; but that was not the fault of the Admiral, it was the fault of the system.'

not explode. This is the condition in which the War Office sent that column of British soldiers to do their work. That is a fact ; but I will give you another. You are aware that in modern warfare what are called machine guns play a large part, that they are valuable for the defence of the ironclads against torpedo boats, and for the defence of military positions. Well, the War Office have purchased a large number of machine guns. At the close of last year—and you remember how critical the state of Europe was at the close of last year—if we had been called upon to go to war there was no ammunition in store for the use of the machine guns—none whatever. There were the machine guns, and no ammunition had been made to use in them. But I will tell you another story, and I think this is the worst of all. I heard this the other day, and I heard it on the highest authority. One of our ironclads, the ‘Monarch,’ a powerful ironclad, came into harbour the other day and required two new heavy guns for one of her turrets. There were no heavy guns to give her. What do you think they did? They took two heavy guns intended for the armament of the Spithead and Portsmouth forts, and they put them on board the ‘Monarch.’ Therefore, you see under this splendid system which expends over 30,000,000*l.* annually, in order to arm one of our ironclads we have to disarm two of our forts. Although for the last thirteen years we have spent 26,000,000*l.*—no less than 26,000,000*l.* of money—in providing, as we thought, for the proper accumulation of munitions of war, guns and warlike stores, yet that is the condition of affairs. Now do you understand what the system is against which I wish to bring, if possible, the pressure of the English people?

I will give you another illustration of the way in which the money goes. I will give you a fact which has just come out, and which is as yet very little known. There is a very important department of the War Office—the Ordnance Department—and that department is under the impression that they are capable of designing heavy powerful guns. In 1883 or 1884 they designed a gun called the 43-ton gun, and they called upon Messrs. Armstrong & Co. of Elswick to construct fifteen of these 43-ton guns. Messrs. Armstrong, who knew more about



gun-construction than the Ordnance Department, suggested that the design was bad, and that it would be a bad gun. The Ordnance Commissioners told Messrs. Armstrong to mind their own business and to make the guns. The guns were made, and cost something like 100,000*l.*, and when made they were sent to Woolwich, and were to be sent to sea in the ships of war. At this moment there comes forward Captain Noble—who had been formerly employed by the Government, and who is, I believe, a director of the Armstrong Company—and says, ‘Do not send those guns to sea: they are bad guns and cannot stand the charge which you are going to place in them.’ The Ordnance Department told Captain Noble to mind his own business, and the guns were sent to sea—four of them on board the ‘Collingwood’—a ship as to which I shall have something to say to you presently. And what happened? One of these guns burst when the second round was fired, with only half a charge. The whole of the guns were recalled and condemned, and an expenditure of some 100,000*l.* was found to have been wasted. Now, mind you, the Ordnance Department was told by the contractors that the guns were bad before they were constructed; they were told by an authority that the guns were bad after they were constructed; and yet the guns were ordered to be made, the guns were sent to sea, and the guns burst. Now, would you believe it—if we had to go to war to-morrow, four of these precious guns are being kept in reserve in order to be placed on board the ‘Collingwood,’ which will be one of the ships we would have to rely on as part of the British fleet. Therefore the sailors of the ‘Collingwood’ will know that, though they are supposed to engage heavy artillery either on land or sea, they are only able to engage that heavy artillery with guns which it is at least a thousand to one will burst when fired with more than half a charge. You would think, and any practical person would think, that the officials responsible for these guns would have fled from the country, or at least have been dismissed from the public service. Not a bit of it. The officials responsible for these guns are occupying high official positions in the War Office at the present moment. And they are now engaged in

spending large sums of money in the construction of what are called 110-ton guns, which are to fire 1,000lb. of powder and to discharge enormously heavy shot ; and the Royal Commission has been investigating the reports relating to these guns, which cost over 20,000*l.* each, and can only fire about 150 rounds. The report says, in a very mild but suggestive manner—‘ They regret to remark that the result does not appear to be equal to the expenditure, and that it is very unfortunate if nothing better can be devised.’ I think you will admit I am bringing before you matters worthy of your attention.

We will leave the War Office alone for a moment and turn to the Admiralty. It would appear that we have a very powerful fleet on paper ; but if you look into the facts, it is not so powerful. In 1883 two large ships were launched, the ‘ Ajax ’ and the ‘ Agamemnon,’ built for having great offensive power and great speed ; but unfortunately it was found when they were launched and went to sea, that if they went faster than eight miles an hour they would not steer, and became utterly unmanageable, and therefore, for all purposes of a ship of war, they were seriously defective. What do you think those two ships cost ? They cost 800,000*l.* Eight hundred thousand pounds was spent on these two ships of war, which could, in all probability, be sent to the bottom by any adversary of anything like equal size which could steer and be handy when at full speed. Some years later they turned out the ship ‘ Impérieuse,’ which was to be armoured in a particular way. When they came to send her to sea, they found that she drew 3ft. 3in. of water more than she was designed to draw. Observe the result. The armour which she would have had above water now became below water. She was supposed to be a powerfully protected ship, but in consequence of her construction she became unprotected ; and on the ‘ Impérieuse ’ the Admiralty spent 500,000*l.* Then the Admiralty went on, not in the least discouraged, to construct six very large ships of what are called the Admiral class. The Admiral class are ships named after the great Admirals, and one of the Admiral class is the ‘ Collingwood.’ They are supposed to be protected ships, and supposed to be able to engage the heavy artillery of land forts or hostile iron-

clads. But this is certain, that so badly constructed is this class of ships, so little is the protection they have, so unscientifically is that protection applied, that for all intents and purposes the Admiral class of ship are unprotected, and are not in a condition to engage successfully heavy land artillery and the heavy artillery of ironclads. This class cost 4,500,000*l.* Some are finished ; others will be finished in 1889, and it is on the Admiral class that the British nation have greatly to depend if they have to defend their coasts and their commerce. Think of the position of sailors on board the 'Collingwood.' The 'Collingwood' is one of this class. The sailors of the 'Collingwood' know they have a gun which is likely to burst if it is fired, and that they are in a ship which, so far from being a protected ship, can be perforated at half a dozen vital points by the artillery of the enemy and sent to the bottom. But the Admiralty were not content with that, and they proceeded to construct two other ships—the 'Victoria' and 'Sans Pareil'—and of those ships I will only say that a person very high in office in the Admiralty considers those two ships to be even worse than the ships of the Admiral class ; and on those two ships they propose to spend 1,600,000*l.* I have proved to you that a total expenditure of 7,400,000*l.* has been incurred by the Admiralty practically for no purpose at all, and in 1885 it occurred to the Admiralty that they would not do badly to change the constructor who was mainly responsible for this splendid effort at shipbuilding. So Sir Nathaniel Barnaby, who was the constructor of that day, retired, and a new constructor was appointed. Now I have to draw your attention to seven more ships to be constructed by the Admiralty, and designed in 1884. They are called belted cruisers, ships of the Australia class—that is to say, 'Australia' is the name of one of the ships. They are designed to have a belt of armour running round their sides five feet six inches wide, and it was intended that no less than eighteen inches of that armour should be above the water-line so as to protect the ship from any hostile shot. It is now discovered that when the ships have got their full quantity of coal on board to enable them to keep the sea, the belt of armour to protect them, instead of being eighteen inches above the

water-line will, be six inches below it. The total cost of those seven ships will be two millions of money, and what I have told you about those seven ships is fully and frankly admitted by the First Lord of the Admiralty. In the official document which he laid before the House of Commons, explanatory of the Navy estimates for this year, he confessed that if the ships are to keep the sea—that is to say, if they are to have a sufficient supply of coals on board—the armour will be six inches below water, and that they will be unprotected. This confession has not yet attracted notice. What is the grand result of all this? The result of all this is, that in the last twelve or thirteen years eighteen ships have been designed by the Admiralty for certain purposes, and on the strength of the Admiralty statements Parliament has faithfully voted the money. The total money which has been voted for these ships has been about ten millions of the money of the tax-payers, and it is now discovered, and officially acknowledged, that, in respect of the purposes for which these ships were designed and of the purpose for which that ten millions was spent, the whole of the money has been misapplied, wasted, and thrown away. Can you conceive such a state of things? Now you understand why it is that the Army and Navy Estimates increase. And is it any wonder that a Chancellor of the Exchequer comes down to the House of Commons and says, after such a state of things as that, ‘My expenditure is so high I really regret to say I cannot any longer afford to repay the capital of the National Debt’?

I have a great deal more which I am most anxious to say to you. You cannot imagine how strongly I feel on this point. I can assure you that when I was occupying the early days of this week in putting together notes and collecting the materials and facts about which I should talk to you to-night, the state of things as they appeared when they came to be placed on paper was so outrageous that at times I got into such a state of vexation and of rage that I was obliged to give up my work for a time and try to think of something else in order to get quiet. I want, if possible, to make you perfectly sick of this state of things. I want to make you as furious and angry against this state of

things as I am myself. I want, if possible, to bring down upon those who are responsible for this state of things the anger, and even the vengeance, of the British people. I have shown you what the system is which spends so many millions of taxes annually on the Army and Navy, and I have shown you what its results are. But would you believe it? With all this, the system itself has increased its own cost to the nation; that is to say, that the War Office has increased its own direct cost since 1875 by not less than 50,000*l.* a year; the non-effective vote of the Army has increased since 1875 600,000*l.* a year. It now amounts to three millions a year. The cost of the Admiralty, the cost of the actual system, has increased since 1875 by 25,000*l.* a year. The naval pensions have increased by 200,000*l.* a year, and the civil pensions—mark this, I beg of you—the civil pensions of the Admiralty have increased by 25,000*l.* a year. The total amount of the non-effective vote of the Navy is two millions, so you have a total vote for pensions, naval and military and civil, of five millions a year which the tax-payers have to pay.<sup>1</sup> In other words, what I have brought before you is this—that the utterly rotten and monstrous system which is responsible for this desperate state of things has actually had the audacity to increase its own direct cost to the public and to the tax-payers by a sum of about one million a year since 1875.

I will give you a curious illustration of the way in which this increase is brought about. You well know when First Lords get to the Admiralty they are always bitten by the mania for re-organisation. I do not know whether it is that they are struck by the bad state of things, or whether they are anxious to bring in their own friends and get rid of friends of their predecessors; but the fact remains that there are always going on what are called re-organisations at the Admiralty. I will tell you something about that. I go back to 1854—a long way back. They were moderate in those days. They had a re-organisation then which cost the country 4,517*l.* in pensions. In 1869—I am getting nearer our own time—re-organisation

<sup>1</sup> The total amount paid by the nation for pensions of all kinds falls little short of 7,000,000*l.* per annum.

cost 8,400*l.* a year in pensions. In 1879 they had a re-organisation which cost the country and the taxpayer 21,000*l.* a year in pensions and 52,000*l.* in bonuses to persons retiring. Would you like to know some facts about these unfortunate persons who retire? I am sure there are many of you who serve large firms and employers for many years with no hope of pensions, and others serve for many years before they can get a pension, and those persons do not receive during their term of service a very high salary. Mark, under this re-organisation of 1879, thirty-eight clerks under forty-six years of age were pensioned off. I will give some details about these clerks to show you what lucky fellows they are. One clerk had a salary of 260*l.* a year; his age was thirty-one, and he received a pension, and probably receives it now, of 130*l.* a year and a bonus of 524*l.* Another clerk received a salary of about the same amount; his age was thirty-seven, and he received, and is probably receiving now, a pension of 207*l.* a year and a bonus of 950*l.* Since that time another large re-organisation has taken place—I think about the year 1885. More appointments at high salaries have been created, and it would seem from indications which we have had in Parliament, but which we have not got out in figures, that very much the same sort of burden has again been placed upon the tax-payers of the country. That shows you how this beautiful system increases its own cost and extends, as it were, like a cancer—like a malignant tumour—into the vitals of the tax-payer. But, gentlemen, that is not all. It may interest you to know, as men of business, what sort of salary the clerks at the Admiralty and War Office receive. They are not only entitled to very high pensions but to very high salaries. At the Secretary's office at the Admiralty, there is one clerk who receives 1,200*l.* a year, three are receiving over 900*l.*, and six are receiving nearly 800*l.* I should like very much to compare these salaries with the salaries which are given in great firms of private enterprise in this country, and I should like to ask the great firms of private enterprise whether they give salaries of that magnitude, and whether they would equally think themselves bound to give high pensions. I take the War Office. The staff of the War

Office consists of twenty-one chief clerks who receive 700*l.* to 900*l.* a year salary, and forty-six senior clerks who receive 460*l.* to 600*l.* There are 557 clerks at the War Office, who cost this country nearly 150,000*l.* a year, and in addition to that the War Office pays 8,000*l.* a year to copyists, who are taken on at tenpence an hour, and who, you may be perfectly certain, do most of the hard work of the office.

We have a public official in this country who is called the Controller and Auditor-General, and every year he examines the accounts of the nation, and reports to Parliament how the money which Parliament has voted is spent. In his report for the year 1885-86 he informs Parliament—but Parliament does not pay the smallest attention to it—that the contractors for some steam machinery received 38,000*l.* more than they had any right to receive by their contract, or the Admiralty had any right to pay; that the contractors for shipbuilding received 50,000*l.* more than they had any right to receive by their contract, or the Admiralty had any right to pay—a total sum of 88,000*l.* of money, public money—generously thrown away by the Admiralty to contractors, and brought before the knowledge of Parliament by the Controller and Auditor-General, and not paid the slightest attention to by Parliament. But, more than that: the Controller and Auditor-General says this. He tells Parliament that Messrs. Armstrong contracted in the year to supply certain gun-mountings to the Admiralty, and were to be paid when the work was completed on delivery. But Messrs. Armstrong did not find that quite convenient, so they came to the Admiralty and said, ‘Would you kindly oblige us with an advance of 200,000*l.*?’ ‘Certainly,’ said the Admiralty, ‘certainly; take it,’ and they gave it them; they gave away generously to Messrs. Armstrong 200,000*l.* of public money which they had not the smallest right thus to dispose of. But I am now going to tell you what I think is the most extraordinary story of all. I am going to illustrate to you the system under which the Admiralty make their contracts. You know they have to make large contracts for machinery and for ships, and I will tell you something about the way in which they do it. All this is on record in the Blue-books; it has all come out. This is how they

negotiate their contracts. You will remember I mentioned a little while ago two ships, the 'Sans Pareil' and the 'Victoria.' Well, the Admiralty wanted engines for these ships, and they invited tenders for engines of 8,500 horse-power. Two of the contractors tendered to provide engines of 10,000 horse-power, or an increase of 1,500 horse-power; and they valued that increased 1,500 horse-power at an increased cost of 8,000*l.* That did not suit the Admiralty at all. They said, 'You gentlemen do yourselves an injustice; this increased horse-power which you value at 8,000*l.* is really worth 15,000*l.* We cannot possibly allow you to rob yourselves in that way, and we will give you for this increased horse-power nearly double what you yourselves value it at.' Now that is a positive fact. More than that: Mr. Wallace, the principal engineer of the Allan Line, who is recognised as one of the most eminent maritime engineers in the country, gave evidence before the Royal Commission that the increased horse-power which the contractors valued at 8,000*l.* and the Admiralty at 15,000*l.*, was not in reality worth more than 2,000*l.* And before the tenders were actually accepted, Messrs. Elder, the great shipbuilding firm, came forward and said, 'This increased horse-power, which the contractors valued at 8,000*l.* and you at 15,000*l.*, we will give you for nothing.' Messrs. Elder were told—very much like the other people I alluded to before—that they did not know their own business, that the Admiralty knew it best. That is how business is carried on in a public department of this most practical country, which spends twelve millions a year. I have not done yet with these ships. It has been proved in evidence before the Committee on Admiralty Contracts that they could have been built for 583,000*l.* each, including all machinery. But the Admiralty seemed to think that was too cheap; so they accepted contracts which made the ships cost, the one 601,000*l.*, and the other 604,000*l.*—again throwing away nearly 40,000*l.* of public money. This, too, is very curious. The two sets of engines required for these ships cost, under the Admiralty arrangements, 111,500*l.* each. Six months after, the Admiralty required facsimiles of the engines, and advertised for tenders, and the lowest tender was 78,000*l.*, a reduction of some



33,000*l.* on the tender which the Admiralty accepted six months before. The Admiralty were startled; they were afraid to take the lowest tender, the difference between the two amounts was so great; so they took a higher tender, but the higher was only 94,000*l.*, or about 18,000*l.* less than the previous engines had cost—and this was in the short space of six months, and although it was proved that there had been no increase whatever in the value of labour or machinery.

We pay a large sum of money for engineers at the dockyards and at the Admiralty; 100,000*l.* a year for what is called the scientific branch of the Admiralty; and, further, a considerable sum for schools of design and construction. But the committee who found out these things report that there is no practical engineering department at the Admiralty with business capacity competent to design engines, and to bring the most varied knowledge and most recent experience to bear on the construction of engines. In other words, although we spend an enormous sum of money upon this extensive department, it has been proved before a committee to be unable to produce what any competent firm could not do without, namely, a practical engineer. You are aware that a great quantity of rope is used in the Navy. Well, the Admiralty think they can make rope much better than the trade. It was proved in evidence before this same committee that the cost in manufacture of rope by the Admiralty exceeds that of the trade by 25 per cent. In this one department alone it was possible for the Admiralty to save 50,000*l.* a year. The Royal Commission presided over by Sir Fitzjames Stephen, which I alluded to in the earlier part of my remarks, makes mention of another matter which I should like to bring before you. We expend a large amount in maintaining at Portsmouth and Woolwich and Greenwich very extensive and perfect chemical laboratories; yet these perfect and extensive establishments, with all their highly-paid officials, have not yet been able to devise or invent a single fuse which can be relied upon to burst a shell. At the bombardment of Alexandria a very large proportion of shells fired never burst, and of those now in use in the British service there is not a single fuse certain to burst a shell. I have given you, I think,

a pretty full sketch and a pretty fair idea of the nature of the system of expenditure of public money against which I protested as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to which I fell a victim. That is the system which, I deeply regret to say, the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Secretary of State for War, badly advised, thought it their duty to maintain; but that is the system I declined to give increased grants of money to as Chancellor of the Exchequer. I said I would not give the tax-payers' money for the maintenance of so rotten and profligate an expenditure of public money. You know that the end of it was that I had to resign. A pretty storm was raised. All London society, all the London clubs, and nearly all the metropolitan press were up in arms. They said, 'How brutal, how foolish, how unpatriotic, to refuse to vote money to those admirable departments!' The opposition was tremendous: there was not a single word or action of mine that was not twisted, distorted, and perverted in order to give the public a false impression of what I was driving at. To such an extent was it carried that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, in replying to me when I was urging economy, so far misrepresented my action and motive that he said I wanted to reduce the numbers of the Army and Navy, that I wanted to send ships to sea without guns, and to construct guns and to provide no ammunition. In other words, he accused me of wanting to do exactly what this monstrous system does which I wish to demolish and destroy. I must tell you one last anecdote in order to show you what I can only call the audacious humbug of the official ring. You must not think that I am particularly blaming the present Ministry. I do not blame them particularly. I remember a story of a witty and sarcastic Irishman who was playing a game of whist with a bad partner. The partner played so badly that he lost the rubber, and afterwards began to apologise. The Irishman said, 'Oh, my dear fellow, do not apologise; I am not blaming you, I am only pitying you.' In the same way, I do not blame the present Ministers. I want to show you the sort of humbug which the official ring think good enough for public consumption. You remember what a fuss was made about

coaling stations when I resigned, and how everybody said I had been unwilling to put this commercial empire in a proper state of defence. It was perfectly untrue, and the authors of the accusation knew it was untrue; but it was made, and accepted very freely, and the authors of the accusation placed themselves in the proud position of being sterling patriots who were determined to place the coaling stations of the empire in a proper state of defence. Well, there came the conference of colonial delegates, and fortunately the 'Standard' newspaper published an account, evidently written by some one present, of the proceedings at the conference. The subject of the coaling stations came before the conference, including the question of the protection of King George's Sound. It is situated on one of the most important waterways in the world; it is on the road to Melbourne; and the British and Indian commerce that passes by King George's Sound to Australia is valued at 120,000,000*l.* a year. At the present time it is an important coaling station and harbour, and is absolutely unprotected. With a view to its defence, the War Office said to the colonists: If you will spend 27,000*l.* on batteries and barracks, and if you will maintain a force of artillerymen, we will give you for the defence of this important coaling station and harbour of King George's Sound—what do you think?—a number of obsolete iron muzzle-loading guns. That was the idea of these sterling patriots of the way in which they were going to defend one of the principal coaling stations of this great empire. The colonists were extremely indignant, and one got up and said he was perfectly amazed at what he called the 'liberality' of the offer, but he begged to assure the War Office that the colonists could do the business a great deal better themselves; and, much ashamed, the War Office withdrew the offer. So much for the defence of the coaling stations.<sup>1</sup>

I frankly confess I have not yet been able to persuade the

<sup>1</sup> How little has been done for the protection of the coaling stations since Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation may be gathered from the following statement contained in a leading article of the *Times*, January 3, 1889:—'The provision of garrisons capable of utilising fortifications and guns has hardly been begun. Important stations could be named which would be

Government of the enormous evils of this system of expenditure of public money. I cannot get the Government to believe in the virtue of economy or in the possibility of retrenchment. I will only give you one instance of the opposition I have to contend against. I suggested after I resigned that there should be a Parliamentary Committee appointed to examine into the estimates for the Army and Navy. The Government acceded with some hesitation and rather a wry face. Weeks passed away and the motion for the committee was never made. At last, when the motion for the committee was put down on the paper, it was immediately blocked, so that it could not be brought on. For weeks it remained blocked, and it would have remained so now if it had not been that one day when the Government proposed to take as the first business that night the vote for the decoration of Westminster Abbey for the Jubilee service, I got up in the House and asked the Government if they really meant to say that they considered the vote for the decoration of Westminster Abbey more important than a Parliamentary inquiry into the vast naval and military expenditure of the country. When the matter was put in that way they yielded, and they brought on the motion at a time when it could be discussed, which they might well have done weeks before. The motion passed without the smallest opposition, and I thought the committee would be immediately nominated. Not at all. A fortnight elapsed—the Whitsuntide holidays came, and the night before the holidays I got a positive pledge from the First Lord of the Treasury that he would nominate the committee that night. The next morning judge my surprise when I found that the committee had not been nominated, but had been again postponed. This committee, which might have done great work, which might have gone into these things and sifted them, cannot now be usefully appointed this year, as the year is, I am afraid, too far advanced and the committee can hardly in the time which remains to Parliament hold more than twelve or

absolutely in the power of our enemies in case of war, unless, indeed, the Admiralty, with its hands full of more pressing business, could find the means to detach ships in time to protect them.' Lord Carnarvon has since made even stronger statements about the utter defencelessness of our coaling stations.

thirteen sittings.<sup>1</sup> All this is very discouraging, very disheartening, and I feel that in these matters I cannot do anything without the help of the English people. You may ask me fairly enough, you may say, 'What do you propose to do?' I have placed before you facts and figures to show you that the British Empire spends 51,000,000*l.* a year on naval and military establishments—31,000,000*l.* more than the German Empire, and 20,000,000*l.* more than the French Republic. I have shown you that, compared with these two great Powers, we are in a state of utter and hopeless military and naval defencelessness and want of preparation. You may well say, 'What are we to do?' I confess to you that I have not spent many months of thought on the subject without being prepared with some sort of plan. I have a plan; but I think for the present I will keep it to myself, because I want to see whether the British people are satisfied with the state of things which I have shown to exist, and I want to see whether the British people are prepared to make an effort to alter it. I will say this much, however—that my plan is undoubtedly based upon a radical sweeping and even revolutionary reform of those two great departments of the War Office and Admiralty. Such a reform would result, in a year or eighteen months' time, in our being placed in a state of fairly perfect military and naval preparation, so far as the provision of stores and munitions of war and things of that kind are concerned; and I think it is a plan that would admit of a reduction of the annual naval and military expenditure by nearer 4,000,000*l.* than 3,000,000*l.* of money. But this much is certain—you may take for granted that you will never get economy, however much you are in favour of it, in your public service, until you get into office Ministers who honestly believe in economy. You may be certain of this—that economy and efficiency are inseparable, and that free expenditure and inefficiency are equally inseparable. For it is a most significant fact that all these great scandals I have placed before you have

<sup>1</sup> The evidence taken before this committee contains information of the most important and valuable character, but unfortunately it is still little known to the public. The condition of the British Army cannot be properly understood without the study of this evidence.

come to light concurrently with large increase of expenditure. No doubt these questions of expenditure are connected with larger questions of finance and of revenue reform. These are matters I will not now touch upon. You know what my opinions are about the Budget.<sup>1</sup> You know how deeply I regretted what I considered the fatal policy of taking from the provision for the reduction of the National Debt a large sum of money for the purpose of concealing extravagance and of making a paltry and a petty remission of taxation. There are three cardinal principles which a Chancellor of the Exchequer is bound to observe in framing his financial policy, all of which this year's Budget violates. They are the principles which regulate, or which ought to regulate, every household in the country; and the first of them is—keep your expenditure down; and the second of them is—pay your way. Don't get into debt—that is to say, pay what you have got to pay out of the revenue of the year. And the third of them is—lay by something every year. That laying-by from a national point of view means paying off debt—repaying our National Debt; and if we want to keep up our credit as a nation we must continue our efforts to repay the National Debt. We can now borrow money at 3 per cent. If we had continued our efforts to repay the National Debt, in a few years we would have been able to borrow money at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. or  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent., which means a large saving to the tax-payer. We now come upon the State for a great many things and we use State credit for a great many reforms. We call upon the State to purchase Irish land. We call upon the credit of the State to help us to make our local improvements or to house our artisans. We call upon the State for the purpose of purchasing allotments. We call upon the State for the purpose of redeeming tithes. We call upon the State for the purpose of still further assisting the education of the country. In all these matters the credit of the State is being put to a severer and severer strain. Is not this a bad moment, of all others, to choose for ceasing to pay off the National Debt, by which alone the credit of the nation is maintained? I have no time to-night to examine

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Goschen's first Budget. See speeches of April 21 and 25, pp. 165-177.

this more in detail, but I most earnestly hope that the British democracy will see the vital importance of this question, and will not allow the present Irish complication to drive this question from their minds. I want the British democracy, which is still young and vigorous, to start fair in money matters and to adhere rigorously to sound principles of financial honesty. Finance is the weak point of democratic government. Look for a moment at the Frenchman. In France you find a pure democracy, universal suffrage, and a republican form of government, and what else do you find? Their expenditure under the government of the Empire was eighty-one millions of money. In the sixteen years which have elapsed since the democracy came into existence in France their expenditure has mounted up to 156 millions of money. They have a floating debt of sixty millions added to a national debt of 782 millions, and every year they have a deficit to meet which they meet mostly by loans, and during the last five years the deficits of French Budgets have amounted to not less than eighteen millions of money. I am deeply indebted to you for the patience with which you have listened to me. I have occupied your time at an unconscionable length, but you do not know the enormous importance I attach to this matter. I had earnestly hoped that the Tory party would have identified itself with this great question of economy, of retrenchment, and of radical departmental reform. I had hoped it; I hope it still. The Tory party has a great and golden opportunity. I am told all over London, in all kinds of quarters, 'You have made a mistake: economy is a most unpopular thing. The people care nothing about it; the mass of the people pay no taxes.' It is in vain that I point out that the labour interest pays at least half the revenue and an enormous sum in local rates. Talking in London on this subject is like preaching in the wilderness. I am of opinion that if the great mass of intelligent voters in the towns do not bestir themselves, if they do not put pressure upon their members and upon Parliament, if they do not force this question to an issue, then we shall find ourselves travelling at racing speed along a downward road which, before long, must lead to a tremendous, irreparable, and perhaps fatal catastrophe.

## OUR NAVY AND DOCKYARDS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JULY 18, 1887.

[The following speech was delivered in Committee of Supply during the discussion on Naval Estimates, Vote 6, which includes the charges for the maintenance of dockyards. Among other facts brought forward in this speech which have never been explained is the large increase in the cost of shipbuilding in the dockyards, in spite of the decrease in the price of material, and the slight decrease in the cost of labour. The immense difference between the estimates for building ships in dockyards and the actual cost of the vessels had not been denied, but no justification has ever been afforded for it. The statements here produced were all derived from official sources, and they serve to illustrate the reckless waste of money which goes on continually in connection with the Navy.]

IF we look back to the year 1872-73 we shall find that 988,562*l.* was thought sufficient in that year for the maintenance of the dockyards at home and abroad. The Admiralty now demand 1,732,600*l.*; so that the vote has practically doubled. But we cannot consider Vote 6 without considering Vote 11, for new works and machinery in the dockyards, and Vote 11 in this year is 553,000*l.* Combined these two votes amount to 2,285,000*l.* Then, Vote 10, for machinery and ships built by contract, has increased by six times since 1872-73. The Committee will, I think, allow that these are remarkable facts. Let me analyse Vote 6 as it stands in the present year. The Admiralty ask for 1,538,095*l.* for the work in the home yards. What are they going to give us in return for that expenditure? They say, 'We are going to spend 702,131*l.* on new construction, 322,268*l.* on refitting and repairing, and 106,569*l.* on manufacturers and materials,' making a total of 1,131,968*l.* This is what the country will get in direct return for its expen-



diture of 1,538,000*l.* in the home yards. But a considerable balance is left, and this balance is entirely absorbed by salaries and incidental expenses. The incidental charges amount to 406,000*l.*; that is to say, the incidental charges, which do not come under the heads of labour and material, amount to no less than 34 per cent. on the return of 1,130,000*l.* which the Admiralty proposes to give. But supposing we add to this expenditure Vote 11, which is for new works and machinery by contract. We then have to add to the incidental charges connected with the maintenance of the dockyards not less than 304,150*l.*; so that we have altogether about 700,000*l.* spent in charges incidental to the maintenance of the dockyards while turning out work valued at 1,100,000*l.*

If I turn to the expenditure upon foreign yards I find that matters are still more serious. The total estimate for foreign yards is 195,322*l.* The direct or effective expenditure on new construction, refitting, and manufactures is put down at 87,659*l.* and the incidental charges amount to 107,663*l.* If I add these incidental charges under Vote 6 to the charges under Vote 11, amounting to 139,000*l.*, I get a total of 246,000*l.* spent upon foreign yards, while the return in direct service amounts only to 87,000*l.* These figures disclose a state of things for which a most elaborate defence is demanded from the Admiralty. Examining the details of Vote 6, I find that there are some curious facts as to the cost of building ships in dockyards. In 1869-70 the average cost was 55*l.* per ton; in 1877-78 it was 80*l.*; and in 1884-85, 109*l.* Therefore the cost of building ships in the dockyards has increased since 1870 by more than 50 per cent., and since 1878 it has increased by 29*l.* per ton. This increase is not accounted for by any increase in the cost of labour. On unarmoured ships the cost of labour since 1878 has only increased 4*l.* per ton. On armoured ships the cost has only increased by 6*l.* We thus only get a mean increase of 5*l.* in the cost of labour, but we get a gross increase of 29*l.* per ton in the cost of building. The price of material will not account for the increase, for there has been an immense fall since 1874 in the prices of nearly all structural materials. Between 1874 and 1883, since which prices have not risen, iron plates fell in

price from 19*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* to 18*l.* 15*s.*; pig lead fell 36 per cent.; zinc, 43 per cent.; mill coals, 23 per cent.; hemp, 15 per cent.; copper, 24 per cent.; and red pine, 50 per cent. Yet, notwithstanding this fall in prices since the time when ships were built at 50*l.* or 60*l.* a ton, there has been a large increase. That is a point on which, I think, the House is entitled to some explanation from the Admiralty. I desire, on this subject, to read an extract from an article in the May number of the 'Westminster Review'—an article of great ability. A more moderate and temperate and wise statement of the matter I do not think I have ever read. The article says:—

'If the period 1873-74 is compared with that of 1886-87, it will be found that the items in the Navy Estimates that are liable to be affected by prices were two and three-quarter millions more in the latter, or cheap, than they were in the former, or dear, times. It would appear that there has been an increase in the latter year of nearly 2,000,000*l.* in the item of "machinery and ships built by private contract." If this had been the only increase—in other words, if the work formerly largely done in the dockyards had been transferred to private naval constructors—there would have been little reason to find fault, since there has been a large consensus of opinion in favour of such a transfer on the part of high authorities and responsible statesmen. But this increase has proceeded *pari passu* with one of 500,000*l.* in the dockyards and naval yards, and of nearly 300,000*l.* in naval stores, for which there appears to be no adequate equivalent given. After every possible allowance has been made that the most indulgent and reasonable of censors can allow, after all the difficulties that confront the Admiralty have been fully extenuated, after the necessarily more cautious and circumlocutionary processes common to Governmental work have been taken into consideration, there still remains a formidable and apparently unanswerable indictment lying at the door of those who are responsible for our naval expenditure. The charges of wasteful, inefficient, and inadequate administration have been proved to the hilt, not by the impersonal or irresponsible criticisms of the public press, of anonymous pamphleteers, or of foreign rivals, but by the evidence of Admiralty officials themselves, and by the well-considered and weighty deliberations of successive committees appointed to inquire into the subject. Of such committees there are two whose recent reports are entitled to special consideration—the first being the committee on the building and repair of ships; the second the committees

appointed to inquire into the Admiralty and dockyard administration and expenditure. They reported in October 1884 that the Admiralty system failed to show the entire cost of labour on a dockyard-built ship ; that the whole question of incidental charges was so obscure as to render unreliable any comparison between the cost of shipbuilding in public and in private yards ; that the incomplete and meagre character of the specifications furnished by the Admiralty to contractors not only increased the time during which ships were under construction, but also materially enhanced the cost of the work ; that the time occupied in building a ship under contract compared favourably with the period of construction in a dockyard, the whole tendency of contract work being to avoid delay ; that a heavy expenditure was incurred in refitting ships that have completed their commission when it was really not required ; and that the Admiralty would do well to follow more largely the practice followed in the merchant navy of adding new ships to their fleet in preference to incurring a heavy expenditure on old ones. . . . They found that alike in the general principles of management and in the merest matters of detail the system was inefficient ; that in spite of enormous sums voted for machinery and works “ the tools employed were of an obsolete character, which must necessarily increase the cost of the work ” ; that large sums of money were wasted in patching up old ships when a very little more, or perhaps even less, would provide entirely new vessels ; that ships were over and over again stripped and “ torn up ” when about to be placed in a new commission, although no such expenditure was required ; that there was a want of touch between the several heads of departments coincidentally with too much centralisation of detail, which caused “ delay and unnecessary correspondence ”—that the whole administrative arrangements were, in fact, such as no private firm or individual would be likely, even if he could afford it, to tolerate for a moment. But more still remained behind. Two years after the committee on the building and repair of ships had presented their report, another of these interesting, but, it is to be feared, absolutely unheeded, documents was submitted to my Lords of the Admiralty, in which the committee on dockyard expenditure reported that “ the supervision of labour is unsatisfactory, and that idleness and incompetence are practically unchecked ” ; that “ the want of co-operation between the superintendent and the officers acts unfavourably upon the cost of works in progress ” ; and “ we can imagine no more unsatisfactory state of affairs, nor one more calculated to subvert all effectual control over the men ” ; that “ very serious inconvenience and waste of labour are experienced both in procuring articles from contractors

and in drawing them from stores"; that "the condition into which dockyard business has been gradually drifting is, and has been for some years, entirely underrated in the Admiralty Department, and, we greatly regret to add, to the very serious detriment of the service"; that there is "no systematic or concurrent financial control over dockyard expenditure"; that "duplication of accounts, over-employment of clerks, preparation of voluminous, and in some cases useless returns, and defective audit" are "defects common to all yards and to all branches of work therein"; and that as regards management "the system is seriously defective, and does not secure a fair return for the vast outlay annually absorbed therein."

Now what I want to know is, what answer the Admiralty have to make to these charges. The Admiralty have told us that they cannot make any reduction in the expenditure, and that any demand for a reduction is intolerable and unjustifiable. But what have the Admiralty done with regard to the charges brought against them in the two reports a summary of which I have just read? I now desire to lay before the House a few figures with a view to comparing the cost of dockyard ships and ships built by contract. Taking for this purpose the 'Constance' and the 'Carysfort,' which are recent ships, it appears that the 'Constance,' which was built in the Chatham Dockyard, cost 114,886*l.* for her hull, and 36,000*l.* for her engines; making a total 150,886*l.*, or 90*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* per ton for her hull, and 15*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* per ton for her engines. The 'Carysfort,' built by contract at Glasgow, cost for her hull 98,480*l.* and for her engines 29,948*l.*, making a total of 128,428*l.*, or 77*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.* per ton for her hull and 13*l.* 5*s.* per ton for her engines, which shows a difference of 22,458*l.* in favour of Glasgow upon the whole cost, of 13*l.* per ton on the hull, and of 1*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* per ton on the engines. Notwithstanding these striking facts the 'Constance' and the 'Carysfort' appear in the estimates as each costing 123,000*l.*; thus making it appear that contract ships and dockyard ships cost the same price. I hope the Admiralty will give us some explanation of this.

I proceed to the case of larger ships—the 'Camperdown,' built in Portsmouth Dockyard, and the 'Benbow,' built by contract on the Thames. The original estimate for the 'Camperdown' was: direct charges, 668,947*l.*; indirect charges, 93,880*l.*

—total, 762,827*l.* The estimate for the ‘Benbow’ was 665,718*l.*, and dockyard work 43,831*l.*, making a total of 709,559*l.*; thus showing a difference of 53,000*l.* in favour of the contract ship. A change having been made in the designs as to the armament of the ‘Benbow,’ an extra expenditure of 50,000*l.* was incurred; but even with this additional expenditure, which was not fairly incurred, the latest estimate for the ‘Benbow’ was only 762,000*l.* as against 776,000*l.* for the ‘Camperdown,’ which is 14,000*l.* in favour of the contract ship. Then take the case of the ‘Immortalité,’ built at Chatham Dockyard, and the ‘Australia,’ built by contract. The direct estimate of the ‘Immortalité’ was 278,720*l.*, and the indirect charges were 45,194*l.*, making a total of 323,914*l.* In the case of the ‘Australia,’ the contract ship, the direct estimate was 245,458*l.*, with 20,955*l.* for dockyard work and indirect charges 5,966*l.*, making a total of 272,379*l.*, showing a difference in favour of the dockyard ship of 51,335*l.* What does the Admiralty say to that? Why in the case of three different classes of ships should the building cost more than in private dockyards? One reason is that the Admiralty never know their own mind. They never have the smallest idea when they lay down a ship how much they are going to spend upon it.

I will give the Committee some examples of this. In the case of the ‘Dreadnought,’ in 1871 the Admiralty came to Parliament and asked it to vote 269,000*l.*, and Parliament voted that sum for the building of the ship. The final estimates, about five years afterwards, came to 445,000*l.*; the actual cost was 491,000*l.*, or nearly double the sum which the Admiralty told Parliament when they induced Parliament to vote the money. Now take the case of the ‘Téméraire,’ a little later. The original estimate upon which Parliament consented to her being laid down—(recollect these are not supposed to be mere phantom estimates; if you tell Parliament, ‘I intend to spend so much on this ship,’ and far more is spent, then Parliament is deluded and deceived, and all Parliamentary control becomes an absolute farce)—the original estimate of the ‘Téméraire’ was 281,000*l.*, the final estimates 356,000*l.*, and the actual cost 375,000*l.*, showing an excess of 90,000*l.* over the original estimate. In the case

of the 'Inflexible' the original estimate was 396,000*l.*, the final estimate 607,000*l.*, and the actual cost 625,000*l.*; showing an excess over the estimate submitted to Parliament of 229,000*l.* Take a smaller class of ships. The original estimate for the 'Shannon' was 168,000*l.*, the final estimate 218,000*l.*, and the actual cost 250,000*l.*, or an excess of 82,000*l.* Therefore, even in the case of a ship like the 'Shannon,' the Admiralty cannot estimate the cost of building her. Take, again, the 'Bacchante,' a well-known vessel. The original estimate was 107,000*l.*, the final estimate 152,000*l.*, and the actual cost 164,000*l.*, making an excess of 57,000*l.* What I want to know is this—what would become of any private firm that made such mistakes as these in its calculations? What would become of such a firm when it found that the cost of building a ship was exactly double their estimate? It would go into bankruptcy. But the Admiralty cannot go into bankruptcy, because they have a deluded Parliament to draw upon *ad libitum*, and these mistakes, which would ruin both the character and credit of any private firm, are passed over by Parliament, and the Admiralty submit estimates they know to be illusory. Again, look at even the estimates of the amount they say they are going to spend in labour upon ships. The original estimate for labour upon the hull of the 'Impérieuse' was 147,000*l.*, and the final cost 210,000*l.*, or an excess of 63,000*l.*; in the case of the 'Warspite' the figures were 147,000*l.* and 202,000*l.*; in that of the 'Mersey,' 62,000*l.* and 98,000*l.*; in that of the 'Severn,' 62,000*l.* and 90,000*l.*; of the 'Curlew,' 19,000*l.* and 26,000*l.*; and of the 'Melita,' 19,000*l.* and 23,000*l.* Therefore the Committee will see that not even in the case of very small ships, where one would think there was no difficulty in estimating the amount, was it in the power of the Admiralty to ascertain what they ought to pay.

I want to show the Committee the utterly untrustworthy and deceptive character of the Admiralty statements contained in the estimates submitted to Parliament. In the appendices you will find a certain amount of labour promised by the Admiralty to be expended on certain classes of ships, some to be advanced and others to be completed. But those statements are not worth the paper they are written on. All which is put in the appendices

escapes the control of the Auditor-General altogether.<sup>1</sup> The Committee will be surprised to hear this. We have a Committee on Public Accounts, but the only check on our Dockyard and Arsenal expenditure is a return called the expense accounts, which is never issued for the Navy until two years, and the Army three years, after the expenditure. That is the only possible check on the departments and the only means of finding out how the departments spend the money. Is not that a disgraceful state of things for the country? I am enabled to furnish some details of the manufacturing establishments, which show the utter absence of Parliamentary control. Take the case of the 'Dreadnought.' She was commenced in 1870. Building was suspended for two years, and begun again in 1872, and the Admiralty told Parliament that they intended to spend in that year for labour and material upon her 27,000*l.* As a matter of fact, what they did spend was only 11,000*l.* Having got Parliament to vote them money to advance the 'Dreadnought' by one-tenth of her total cost, they only advanced her by one-sixtieth. In 1878 they told Parliament that they were going to spend 12,000*l.* in labour only; as a matter of fact, they spent 26,000*l.* In 1873 the Admiralty informed Parliament they intended to spend 28,000*l.* in labour upon the 'Téméraire'—that is to say, to advance her by one-fifth of her total cost. As a matter of fact, they only spent 5,618*l.*, not even a fraction of her total cost. In 1874 they told Parliament they intended to spend 36,000*l.* on the 'Téméraire;' they only spent 24,000*l.* In the case of the 'Shannon' in 1873, the estimate for labour was 15,000*l.*, the actual expenditure only 6,000*l.* In 1874 the figures were 27,000*l.* and 42,000*l.*; in 1875, 26,000*l.* and 35,000*l.*; and in 1876, 11,000*l.* and 16,000*l.* In 1877, apparently, the Admiralty did not intend to spend any money upon the 'Shannon,' but they spent 5,500*l.* upon her. This shows the utter uselessness of the Admiralty telling Parliament, 'We will advance a ship so much.' The money is given to them and then it is spent for other purposes—money that is voted for repairs is spent upon building, and *vice versa*. It may be right;

<sup>1</sup> The Admiralty, in 1888, altered their form of estimates in order to meet this criticism.

but I contend that, unless we are going to make the whole thing like the commonest farce, the estimates submitted to Parliament should be adhered to, and Parliament should know that the money it has voted for a certain purpose will be devoted to that purpose and not spent as the Admiralty choose.

I pass to another point. I wish the Committee to see how utterly useless is our alleged Parliamentary control. Why is it that in the case of the 3,000,000*l.* or 4,000,000*l.* we spend under Vote 6, or the 3,000,000*l.* or 4,000,000*l.* we spend under Votes 11, 12, and 13 for the Army, we have absolutely no audit, no Parliamentary control or knowledge, until three or four years after the money has been spent? The Committee, perhaps, has no idea of that, but it is so, and that is exactly what must be put a stop to. Let me refer to the question of incidental charges. I want to compare them with the labour charged direct to ships and other effective services. In 1880 the indirect charges for the home dockyards were 662,000*l.*, and the direct charges for labour in connection with ships were 884,000*l.*—that is to say, the indirect charges amount to 70 per cent. of the direct charges. I do not believe any country in the world can show such bloated charges as those. The labour charges have gone up from 864,000*l.* in 1880 to 1,152,000*l.* in 1885—an increase of 288,000*l.* What I want to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty is this. In his memorandum he contrived to hint, if he did not actually state, that he looked forward to a large reduction in the expenditure upon shipbuilding, because many contracts would fall in. Does the Admiralty intend to make a corresponding reduction in the indirect charges? Let us analyse some of those charges. I must tell the Committee that it is quite impossible to find the total cost of any dockyard either at home or abroad. I do not believe it is possible for any member of the Admiralty, or for the cleverest clerk in the Admiralty, to find out the total cost of any dockyard within a good many thousands of pounds. At Portsmouth the direct vote for labour was 374,000*l.*, while the incidental charges for the establishment amounted to 260,000*l.*, or 70 per cent.; at Devonport the direct vote for labour was 277,000*l.*; the incidental charges, 182,000*l.*, or 65 per cent.; Chatham—direct vote, 272,000*l.*; incidental



charges, 164,000*l.*, or 59 per cent.; Sheerness—direct vote, 95,000*l.*; incidental charges, 75,000*l.*, or 78 per cent.; Pembroke—direct vote, 133,000*l.*; incidental charges, 56,500*l.*, or 42 per cent.; Haulbowline, 171*l.*; incidental charges, 4,500*l.*, or 2,572 per cent. The Admiralty have expended altogether 526,000*l.* in the extension of Haulbowline, and the expenditure has not ceased. I have no hesitation in saying that the whole of that half-million has been absolute and total waste, and that if we had taken that money and expended it in real public works in Ireland we would have done fifty times more good than we are likely to do as regards the naval expenditure at this yard. (Lord G. Hamilton shook his head in dissent.) I am not the least bit deterred by the dissent of the First Lord from that statement; I assert that the Haulbowline dockyard is a fair instance of profligate waste, and that the expenditure upon it ought to be stopped. The First Lord takes up this position. He says: 'We can make no economy; we must keep all our expenditure going; it is all justifiable; and though the taxes are high and people crying out, every penny of these thirteen millions we must have for the Navy;' and yet here we find going on at Haulbowline expenditure which is the most utter waste. As regards the foreign yards, in the first place, the Admiralty do not separate the incidental charges from the labour in detail. For some reason or other they conceal that, and we can only get them in the total. They give them, however, in connection with Hong Kong and Malta. Now, the labour vote at Hong Kong was 10,000*l.*, while the incidental charges were 29,000*l.*, or 300 per cent.; at Malta the labour vote was 48,000*l.* and the incidental charges 63,000*l.*, or 133 per cent. If we take all the foreign yards—Antigua, Bermuda, Cape of Good Hope, Esquimalt, Gibraltar, Halifax, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Malta, Sierra Leone, Sydney, and Trincomalee—we find a total vote of 80,000*l.*, for labour, with incidental charges amounting to 213,000*l.*, or 266 per cent. Now, make any allowance you like as to keeping up certain expenditure, and still I defy any one to say that that scale of incidental charges is not grossly extravagant. There is one remarkable feature in connection with establishment charges in the home yards, and that is the item of salaries. I particularly

invite the First Lord to explain how it is that the salaries of superintendents, officers, and clerks, which were 101,000*l.* in 1878-9, rose to 174,000*l.* in 1885-6—an increase of 73,000*l.*; and if he pleads that he cannot answer for those years, I will put another question—namely, how is it that the salaries of superintendents, officers, and clerks have increased from 140,000*l.* in 1884-5 to 172,000*l.* in 1887-8? And it is very curious that whereas our 140,000*l.* worth of salaries superintended 1,200,000*l.* worth of wages to labour, we now require 172,000*l.* in salaries to superintend 1,300,000*l.* of wages—*i.e.* an increase of 100,000*l.* in wages to labour requires an increase of 30,000*l.* a year to superintendents, officers, and clerks. That is a remarkable state of things, and one that the First Lord will find difficulty in explaining satisfactorily.

Let me take the Committee to Sheerness Dockyard. An enormous sum of money has been expended on Chatham and Portsmouth. In their extension there has been expended 4,245,000*l.*, and, clearly, it was intended by the Admiralty that when these extensions were completed Sheerness would be shut up. But is Sheerness, which shows 78 per cent. for incidental charges, going to be shut up? Not for a moment. On Vote 11 there is taken for new works at Sheerness 8,000*l.*, for repairs 4,735*l.*, for new machinery 738*l.*, and for new machinery by contract 2,200*l.*—in all, 15,673*l.* for new works and machinery this year, although we have spent an enormous sum on Chatham and Portsmouth on the understanding that Sheerness was to be closed. The total cost of Sheerness this year with these new works amounts to 100,000*l.*, and it would be as easy for the Admiralty to save that 100,000*l.* to-morrow as for the First Lord of the Admiralty to rise in his place. And this is the First Lord (pointing to Lord G. Hamilton) who said he could not make one single economy in the Navy Estimates! I assert, without the smallest fear of contradiction, that you might by mere application for three weeks reduce the gross charge for incidental expenses by at least 100,000*l.*, and, by careful and prolonged watching, by more. I must point out that by the proposal to shut up Haulbowline and Sheerness you might not only save a great deal of money, but you might do a very good

thing by getting rid of the buildings and land. Now, let me ask the First Lord to explain some of these sources of waste. I learn that during 1885-6 in the dockyards it was thought necessary to expend 14,000*l.* on cable chains and moorings, 22,934*l.* for hawsers and rope for guys, and 2,477*l.* for yard boats. I am told by those who know that this is a very large sum of money. I have been told that there are eight or nine lighters which are very rarely used, two men and a boy being kept on each lighter for the purpose of taking care of it. That is the kind of thing which goes on under the head of these incidental charges, and they are matters which the Admiralty cannot possibly defend. The First Lord of the Admiralty will perhaps explain another matter connected with the incidental charges. We maintain a laboratory at Greenwich costing 1,000*l.* a year, but for some reason the Admiralty thought it necessary to erect another laboratory of an expensive character at Portsmouth, costing 2,350*l.*, and maintained at a cost of 750*l.* a year. That is the way the money goes. Have the Admiralty ever considered the number of depôts on the South American station and the North American station comparatively? Is the Admiralty aware that for the last few years all the depôts on the South American station have been done away with, and that the vessels on this station draw stores direct from England? For the North American station, apparently, a different principle prevails. The Admiralty maintain at a very considerable cost three depôts on that station—Halifax, Bermuda, and Jamaica. I think the Admiralty will hardly deny that one depôt for the North American station would be ample, and we might save money on the others. These are economies which might be made if you were bent upon economy. I turn to another subject. An enormous amount of money is spent on chaplains and schools in the dockyards. A most ridiculous amount is spent altogether on education in the Navy—2,400*l.* is spent every year for chaplains at Chatham, and 2,980*l.* every year for schools. I can conceive that at the dockyards of Portsmouth, Chatham, Devonport, and elsewhere there must be a large surplus of clergymen who would discharge the religious duties required at a very much lower figure; and as far as the schools are concerned,

there must be a large number of elementary schools to which the dockyard children might go. But some of the dockyard schools are for higher education—for engineers and students—and this raises an important question. The system of education pursued in the Navy is a remarkable one. An enormous sum of money is spent on the education of shipwrights and others who may rise from the ranks in the dockyards up to high positions in the departments. It is an extremely extravagant method. We maintain for that purpose dockyard schools and Greenwich College, which receives 5,500*l.* a year. We make all kinds of allowances to instructors for apprentices, amounting to 5,000*l.*; and having educated several hundred apprentices a year in order to get a very few good, we leave them at perfect liberty to seek service in foreign countries or in private yards. It happens, therefore, that after the country has spent a large sum of money in educating these students they instantly leave us and go either to the enemy or to private enterprise. Is that not an absurd and extravagant system? If any one of us went to Sir William Armstrong's or to Whitworth's for scientific education we should have to pay a large premium. This is often a source of profit to these firms; but the Navy pursues the reverse method: it pays persons in order to teach them the science of shipbuilding. That is a system which is susceptible of large reform. The whole method of education in the Navy must be reconsidered, and if we do that we must save a large sum of money. That, however, is perhaps a larger question than may properly be brought in to be examined on this vote. But, speaking generally, besides Greenwich College we maintain the 'Britannia' at 22,000*l.* a year, *plus* 15,000*l.* contribution; we maintain the 'Marlborough' and the school at Devonport for engineer students at a cost of 13,393*l.* and 3,000*l.* contribution. The whole question of Navy education, I think, ought to be carefully examined by the Admiralty, and is worthy of being examined by the House.

I have one more remark to make on this dockyard vote, and it is this: I want the explanation of the Admiralty as to the system of spending money on ships that have been completed. I have found in the estimates some curious instances in regard

to sums spent on repairs up to March 1886. I find, for instance, that in 1881-2 the 'Constance' was built at a cost of 123,000*l.*, and up to March 1886 you had spent 8,000*l.* on her. In 1879-80 the 'Carysfort' was built at a cost of 123,000*l.*, and 12,556*l.* was spent on her. In 1878-9 the 'Comus' was built at a cost of 123,000*l.*, the sum of 47,595*l.* being spent on her to keep her going. What is the meaning of such sums being spent on repairs? The 'Shah,' built in 1876-7, cost originally 249,984*l.*, and 40,000*l.* has been spent on repairs connected with a ship which you are not going to employ. The 'Leander,' built in 1885-6, was completed for 191,000*l.*, but in the same year the Admiralty spent 8,947*l.* on her. What is the reason? The ship is delivered fully completed, but it is found necessary, either with regard to ships built by contract or ships built in the dockyards, to be continually spending vast sums of money on those ships. I was told by a military gentleman from Malta that the 'Carysfort' was redocked and refitted at immense cost, although my informant said that the captain had declared that she did not require a penny to be spent upon her. Take some other ships, and see what was spent up to March 31, 1886. The 'Agincourt'—first cost 483,000*l.*, and there has been spent on her for repairs 202,000*l.* The 'Northumberland'—first cost 490,000*l.*; 201,000*l.* spent in repairs—ships, I believe, perfectly useless for fighting purposes. The 'Penelope'—another useless ship—first cost 196,000*l.*; 94,000*l.* has been spent on repairs. The 'Iron Duke'—first cost 280,000*l.*; 186,000*l.* spent on repairs. The 'Swiftsure'—first cost 267,000*l.*; 102,000*l.* spent on repairs; and so on with the smaller ships. These are the matters connected with this vote which I want the Committee to consider. Let me briefly summarise the points—the form in which the estimates are brought before Parliament is not only perfectly inconvenient for Parliament to get any knowledge as to what they are spending, but deliberately calculated and contrived to keep out the Controller and Auditor-General; the number of dockyards at home and abroad add the enormous incidental charges connected with them; the utter unreliability of the estimates as regards ships, whether as regards the final cost or the final estimate as compared with the original; the

useless amount spent on repairs and alterations ; the amount of money which is spent in the maintenance of foreign yards which might be well closed—those are the matters which have been brought forward as bearing out in every word the condemnation, the strong and deliberate condemnation, passed upon the system pursued by the Admiralty, by the two Committees which I quoted at the beginning of my speech. I trust the First Lord of the Admiralty will not put these remarks, thoroughly authenticated and well-founded, aside by merely trusting to his official majority. If he does not attach importance to them, the country does. The country will not go on throwing millions of money into the hands of the First Lord of the Admiralty to have them expended in the way in which the official documents show they are expended. Let him show what he has done to produce improvement in those branches of the service ; or if he does not, I do earnestly implore the Committee to refuse absolutely to proceed with this vote until the Admiralty have furnished the most ample and complete information.

## ECONOMY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

WHITBY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1887.

[At the close of the session of 1887 Lord Randolph Churchill attended a meeting at Whitby, and reviewed the work which had been done. He expressed strong approval of most of the measures of the Government, but there is space here only for that portion of the speech which dealt with the question of retrenchment and honest administration.]

**B**EFORE concluding my review of last session I should like to mention one feature—a source of especial gratification to myself. I mean the strong disposition which was manifested on the part of Parliament to initiate and sustain a vigorous campaign against the extravagant expenditure of public money. The strong disposition which I noticed in the House of Commons to carry on with will, vigour, and resolution that great work—the greatest, I think, of all the works of the present day—the work of economy and retrenchment, of radical retrenchment and reform in our public service, will, I hope, continue. I have noticed that disposition since the beginning of the session in all quarters of the House. I have even detected it in Government circles. For years you have had talk about economy; for years you have had lamentations over the growth of public expenditure; for years you have had promises of retrenchment and reform; but not until now have you been treated to performance. I cannot say that much marked progress has yet been made; the work has only just begun; but I would look for great results next session. You must recollect that this edifice of national extravagance has been the result of years of neglect. It cannot be thrown down by mere shouting or in a moment. It must be demolished bit by bit and taken down stone by stone; and

a new building must be erected in its place. All this will be undoubtedly a work of time, and I would not look for marked results before another year has gone by. I will not now enter into this question in detail. I will only say that the work of public economy has been well begun, and that, as far as I can judge, the labourers are many for the work, and that they come from all parties in the State. I permit myself on this subject at the present time two observations only. In the first place, I would observe that the action which I took with regard to this question last December—action which at the time was freely criticised and severely condemned in all quarters—if looked at now and judged now solely from the point of view of economy, and within the limits of the question of economy, excluding disturbing elements, has, it must be admitted by all reasonable persons, been justified, and more than justified, not only with regard to the grounds upon which it was based, but with regard to the results, general and particular, which have followed, and are still following, from that action. But to that remark, though I have made it, I do not attach much importance, because, whether people admit it or do not admit it, nobody in the world will ever persuade me that I was in error on that point. But my second observation is, I think, of more importance. People talk a great deal about hard times. They talk a great deal about the depression of trade, commerce, and agriculture. They talk a great deal about the intolerable pressure of high taxation. All that they say is probably very true, and you have a great many remedies preached to you for this most difficult and disturbing state of things. There are some who preach to you of Protection. There are others who preach to you of a kind of modified Protection which they call Fair Trade. There are others who preach to you bimetallism, and who say that if the State were to fix by law the relative value of silver and gold prices would rise. I will not discuss those remedies at the present moment, because to every one of them there is a fatal objection, and that is, that any of those remedies, if proposed, would excite the most ferocious party controversy and the most protracted party opposition, and consequently little progress would be made with them in Parliament and little result would



follow for a very long space of time, even if they were adopted. That is my objection to any of those remedies. But of this I am perfectly certain, that if I had my way, and if I could see great departments of the State filled by men who had thoroughly at heart and who thoroughly believed in and were convinced of a possibility of economy, I could make more millions for the service of the State, either for remission of taxation or for meeting legitimate expenditure, out of economy, retrenchment, and departmental reform than any Protectionist, Fair Trader, Bimetallist, or any other metallist could extract, no matter how ingenious might be the remedy which he might persuade Parliament to adopt; and more than that: I would guarantee on the most recognised and widely accepted principles of finance that you would have 50 per cent. more efficiency in your public services than you have at the present moment. The advantages of my method are obvious, because not only would it, if adopted by Government and Parliament, bring prompt and speedy relief to an overtaxed and overburdened nation, but it would excite no party contention. On the contrary, it would excite the co-operation, or at any rate the friendly rivalry, of all parties in the State.

What is the general character of the public services of this country at the present moment? The great feature and characteristic of it is this, and it is one of which you may well be proud—that we employ three men to do the work of one, and we pay each of the three men at least one-third higher salary than we need pay to one man who would do the work which the three pretend to do. We retire men prematurely on high pensions at a time when they are perfectly capable of doing good service to the State. That is the general feature and characteristic of the public service of Great Britain, supposed to be the most practical country in the world. I particularly allude to the Pension List, because the Pension List of this country has reached proportions which make it positively nothing less than a national scandal. The Pension List of this country is a list amounting to, I believe, over six millions of money a year; six millions of money in mere pensions; *3d.* in the income tax—imagine what that is! With those six millions,

in about forty years we might pay off the whole of the National Debt, which costs us twenty-six millions a year at the present moment. This gives an idea of the pressure of the Pension List upon the people, and of what vital importance it is that the Pension List should be cut down and kept down. But to go back to our public services. If the State purchases articles for its own use by contract, it generally pays from 20 to 40 per cent. more than a private individual would do. If the State thinks it will manufacture the articles it wants by itself, the cost for manufacturing is about double what the private manufacturer would incur. These are no mere assertions—they have been proved over and over again by speeches, committees, and inquiries of all sorts and kinds—they are undeniable facts; and with all this ludicrous and shameful extravagance in public expenditure, it is admitted by all, at the same time, that we have not real efficiency in our public services and our public departments. I do not know whether you agree with me, but I am strongly of opinion that the time for this state of things has gone by. I perceive that this democratic Parliament does not intend to tolerate this state of things any more. Nothing ever gave me greater satisfaction and delight, nothing gave me greater amusement, than to notice during the course of last session the impatience and utter incredulity with which members of Parliament received the usual stereotyped official answers with regard to questions of expenditure and administration. It was obvious that the House of Commons were not going to content themselves with the answers, the stereotyped answers, which former Parliaments had been content with. Former Parliaments used to regard those answers as if they were gospel. But the present democratic Parliament has a tendency to regard them as fictions founded upon fact; and a most useful effect is being produced on the public departments. The permanent officials are, I believe, learning a very useful lesson that they are not gifted with infallibility, and that they are not to continue to regard the House of Commons with that air of superiority with which they have been accustomed to regard that House as a body, and members of Parliament as individuals. They are learning that

they are not masters of the House of Commons—that as servants of the Crown, and indirectly the servants of the House of Commons, their duty is to carry out the policy of the House of Commons, and that the House of Commons is not disposed to put up with any of the shifts and excuses for maladministration which contented former Parliaments. I think that all this is extremely useful, and is sure to produce a harvest of benefit and good to the nation. Nothing, certainly, has given me greater pleasure than the effect which the labours of the last session have produced upon the interests of economy, retrenchment, and departmental reform; and no one looks forward with greater hope and confidence to the labours of this Parliament in future sessions than I do.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S LATER POLICY.

SUNDERLAND, OCTOBER 20, 1887.

[The following address was devoted to a criticism of a speech made by Mr. Gladstone the previous evening at Nottingham. The great question of the liquor traffic was discussed in a spirit which somewhat surprised some members of the Conservative party; but Lord Randolph's ideas found partial expression in certain clauses of the Local Government Act of 1888, although these clauses were, from a variety of causes, withdrawn. The declaration in favour of judicious legislation for the encouragement of temperance was emphatically repeated at Paddington in November 1888.]

I OWN that when I first received an invitation, some three or four years ago, to visit the North of England for political purposes, I never anticipated in those days that if I did come I should have addressed other than a purely Tory gathering. But times and parties have changed; and it is with inexpressible satisfaction that, in these days of difficulty and danger, I find myself on this occasion, on a visit to the North of England, addressing a meeting which represents all parties in the State. You are aware that there has been within the last week or so a very brisk political debate going on in the country; almost as brisk a debate as you could have in the House of Commons itself. The only difference between this debate and debate in the House of Commons appears to me to be that, instead of members answering each other from their places in the Senate, they answer each other from town to town in the United Kingdom. The main feature of that debate, the most interesting—I cannot say the most instructive—has been the speeches which have been delivered yesterday and the day before yesterday by the leader of the Opposition. Those were speeches which had been greatly looked forward to; and I fancy that those speeches

have disappointed alike friends and foes. They were speeches of prodigious length and compass, and therefore it will not be within my power, consistently with the demands which I might legitimately make upon your indulgence, to go at length over all the ground covered by those speeches. But Mr. Gladstone brought before the country what purported to be the domestic programme of his own personal following. I cannot call it the Liberal party, because the Liberal party has ceased to exist. This programme, excluding Ireland, which Mr. Gladstone put before the country is undoubtedly a programme of interest, which we shall do well to-night to examine so as to find out whether what Mr. Gladstone promises to the people is good, and whether, if it be good, we could not quite as well obtain it through the Unionist party, and possibly better from the Unionist party than from Mr. Gladstone. He mentioned various subjects of interest, and I will take them in the order in which they came. He placed in the first position the question of Parliamentary registration, and he made a very curious remark on that subject. He declared that it was a subject of first-class importance—and there I do not disagree with him; but he went on to say, ‘We want an enfranchised nation to work with.’ That is all very well; but I thought, and I suspect a good many of you thought, that when Mr. Gladstone dealt with Parliamentary reform about two years ago he dealt with that reform completely, and he told you that the result of his Bill would be that you would have an enfranchised nation to work with. But now it would appear that his work has been, like former work, badly done—that it has been incomplete and defective. There are two points involved in this question. There is the principle, which is conveniently expressed by the formula of ‘one man one vote.’ That is one principle which is involved in the matter of Parliamentary registration. The other is the machinery of registration. Now, on the question of one man one vote, gentlemen, I have this to say. I do not think it a question of very great importance; it is not a matter which involves any great or vital principles. I cannot imagine that any very serious opposition would be excited if ‘one man one vote’ was to be applied strictly to the composition of the Parliamentary

register and to the exercise of the Parliamentary franchise. You have the one man one vote principle strictly applied to many of the great boroughs: in Manchester, in Liverpool, in Birmingham, in Glasgow, in Sheffield, in Bradford, in London, and several other places, no man, although he may own property in all the divisions in the town, can record his vote in more than one. Take Newcastle and Gateshead. There are two separate towns—not two divisions of a borough—and a man who owns property in Newcastle and Gateshead may vote in both places, although if they were one town he would only have one vote. That is an anomaly; it is a distinction which rests upon no solid difference. I do not believe that what is known as the property vote, which would be more or less modified if one man one vote was strictly applied—I do not believe that the property vote is indispensable to the protection of the rights of property. We have preferred, and no body of men more so than the Tory party, to repose the defence of the rights of property upon the good sense and intelligence of the whole community; and if the good sense and the intelligence of the whole community are not adequate to the proper treatment of and proper respect for the rights of property, then no special privileges of franchise are likely to defend those rights. Therefore I have no very strong opinion about the property vote. I expect that at a general election the exercise of the property vote amounts numerically to not more than some thirty thousand in a recorded vote of four millions and a half. Obviously the principle applies of *de minimis non curat lex*, though, undoubtedly, at by-elections the property vote might be of some importance. Still, at a general election the change which would be affected by the application of the one man one vote principle is not of any vital import to the political stability of the community. So far as I am concerned, if the question of one man one vote was raised in Parliament I should not think it my duty to vote against the application of that principle. The question of machinery is of very different and far greater importance. We have now, for the purpose of Parliamentary registration, when our electoral roll numbers over five million persons, exactly the same machinery for registering the electors as we had when

the electoral roll amounted to only about half a million. On the face of it, that can hardly be a good arrangement. What are the three factors in Parliamentary registration? There is, in the first place, the overseer, who is an official changed annually, and unremunerated. There is, in the second place, the revising barrister—these are the two official parties concerned in registration; and then you have an authority—a very powerful one, but not official—and that is, the political machinery and the political organisation of the two rival parties in the State. I am not impressed with the last of these authorities as a valuable factor in Parliamentary registration; because, in the first place, it is an authority which is extremely costly, which is maintained with difficulty; and, in the second place, I suspect that the main object of a political party is not so much to make up a good and fair register of electors, as to keep off persons who ought to be on, and to keep on people who ought to be off; so that any improvement of the official machinery which should diminish the exertions of the two rival political parties in respect to registration would, I think, be a great national benefit. I come to the official element, and have nothing to say against the revising barrister. I believe the work of the revising barrister is well done. But when I come to the overseer, there I have a great deal of fault to find; and I only wish to say now on this point that I believe that the local official concerned with Parliamentary registration should be a paid professional officer occupied with no other duty than that of continually looking after the composition and the proper maintenance of the electoral roll. I believe that the registration of Parliamentary voters, at any rate in its origin, is strictly a work of local concern, and that it ought to be made part of the duties which devolve upon local authorities.

I come to the question of the Reform of the Land Laws. What did Mr. Gladstone say about that? He said we want to sweep away bodily the system of landed entail. Yes, but what does he mean by that? Does he mean that he will absolutely prohibit any settlement of any sort or kind of landed estate? Because, if he means that, I believe that he is going far beyond what the general sense of the community would acquiesce in.

There is nothing more valued in this country than the large freedom which we possess of testamentary bequest, and any undue or despotic curtailment of the freedom of testamentary bequest would be greatly resented in this country. Therefore, if Mr. Gladstone, in sweeping away bodily the system of landed entail, means to prohibit all settlement of any sort or kind of land, then I say I am entirely opposed to so large and so radical an innovation. But, on the other hand, if he means merely to confine his reform to the abolition of the entail of landed estate upon lives unborn, then I agree with him, and I imagine that a majority of both parties in the House of Commons would agree with him, that the power, possessed by individuals, of entailing landed estates upon unborn lives has been a great barrier, a great dyke, a great dam, which has kept back from the land the new capital, new energy, new ideas which are required for its proper development. And I would point out that you may pass any laws you like to facilitate the transfer of land; you may set up the most elaborate machinery for registration of title; but until you deal with this question of entail on unborn lives you will not have made any real reform of the land laws of this country. The landed interest of England is going through a time of trial. I believe it is vital to the landed interest to shake itself free from that cramping fetter and chain of entail upon unborn lives. I believe an enormous amount of vitality would be infused into the landed interest if a short bill—it might be a bill of one clause only—were passed through Parliament, providing that from and after a certain date all entail of landed estates upon unborn lives should be illegal, null, and void. Mr. Gladstone, however, gives no indication of the extent to which he would go in this matter, and it is a matter on which we cannot afford to remain in the dark. Mr. Gladstone alluded to the agricultural interest, and he did not say much of comfort. All he said was that his own Agricultural Holdings Act, which he passed in 1883, was more beneficial than the one passed by Lord Beaconsfield in 1875. Lord Beaconsfield's Act had, no doubt, one defect. It allowed parties affected to contract themselves out of the scope of the Act; and, as far as I know, all Mr. Gladstone's Act of 1883 did was to remedy that defect.



But, curiously enough, Mr. Gladstone made precisely the same mistake when dealing with another subject of importance to the working classes of this country. I allude to the Employers' Liability Act. He passed in 1880 a law, which, I believe, was wisely drawn and well conceived, to regulate the liability of employers towards their workmen in consequence of accidents happening to the workmen. But what was the fault of that Act? It was that parties were allowed to contract themselves out of the Act. At that time I and several other Conservatives strove very hard to make that Act of compulsory application. It is not by any means a Radical idea to make that Act compulsory. One of the most respected members on the Conservative side of the House—I regret to say, he died some years ago—Mr. Knowles, then member for Wigan; and a very large employer of labour, led a section of the Conservative party, of which I was one, in a great effort to make that Act compulsory, and, in Mr. Knowles's absence one day, at his request I moved an amendment to that Act providing that it should be compulsory, and also providing a co-operative system of insurance among the employers, with a view to guard against ruinous liability in consequence of accidents. But Mr. Gladstone's Government resisted, and resisted successfully. The consequence has been that you have had efforts in Parliament to extend the scope of the Employers' Liability Act. Therefore, Mr. Gladstone is open to the same reproach in dealing with the liability of employers as he brings against Lord Beaconsfield in dealing with the relation of farmers and landlords. I only wish on this subject to make this remark—that I think the State ought to be most cautious, most reluctant, to interfere with matters of contract between man and man. But when it does so interfere, in obedience to a great popular demand, I think its dealings should be thorough, and that the form of contract which it lays down should be universal and of compulsory application.

Mr. Gladstone made some remarks about a subject which interests the masses of the people—I mean the question of Protection—and he denounced in turn all who advocated any return to the principle of Protection. I am not prepared to differ with

Mr. Gladstone's strictures on Protection to-night. I have only to point out that Mr. Gladstone did not state the case fairly. He said that the farmer and the manufacturer—he talked about a silly manufacturer and an uneasy farmer agreeing between themselves to put import duties on articles of foreign import, the manufacturer to put duties on manufactures and the farmer to have duties on corn and wheat and articles of home produce. He asked what benefit would arise to the artisan and agricultural labourer from these duties? He insinuated that no benefit would arise, and I am not prepared to contradict him. But I think, when you are talking on a subject of great interest to the people, and when you hold such a position as Mr. Gladstone does, you should be careful to state the case fairly to the people; and Mr. Gladstone ought undoubtedly to have added that the advocates of Protection have always urged that a great stimulus to industry and a great rise in wages would, as they allege, follow a return to protective duties, and would entirely compensate—and more than compensate—the labourer and the artisan for the rise in the price of necessaries of life. I do not at all commit myself to that argument for Protection, but it is one which the country is perfectly open to consider. The main reason why I do not join myself with the Protectionists is that I believe that low prices of the necessaries of life and political stability under democratic institutions are practically inseparable, and that high prices of the necessaries of life and political instability under democratic institutions are also practically inseparable. That is one reason for being extremely cautious before joining in with the Protectionist cry.

I pass to another question which Mr. Gladstone touched upon, and which he said very little about—the question of Local Government. He alluded to it as a matter of pressing importance, and stated that local government should be reformed because we wanted the introduction into our local government of the representative principle. There I entirely agree with him. I think that, as you have given full and perfect representation to the masses of the people for imperial purposes, it is idle and frivolous and ridiculous to be fearful of giving full and perfect representation to the people in local concerns. He went

on to say we wanted a readjustment, a large and equitable readjustment, of imperial and local burdens. Well, there I also entirely agree with him, and so do the entire Unionist party. And then he said that we wanted in connection with local government great decentralisation; and there again not the slightest difference, I imagine, would arise between Mr. Gladstone and his Unionist opponents. I think it is absolutely necessary, in any large scheme of local government, that we should confer on the county councils large executive powers, large taxing powers, and to some extent legislative powers also. I think that by that means you would enormously diminish the labour which now devolves upon the House of Commons. Therefore, you observe, Mr. Gladstone has no monopoly whatever with regard to the necessity for great reforms in local government.

Now I come to the question of the liquor laws; and on that he was extremely vague, and I do not think the temperance party owe anything to Mr. Gladstone. Nothing whatever; they have given him many times a warm and hearty support, and what has he done for them? Nothing at all. On three separate occasions in the Parliament of 1880-85 the principle of local option was affirmed by large majorities in the House of Commons, but not a morsel of attention did Mr. Gladstone pay to those majorities. When he found himself at the head of a majority in 1886, neither at that time did he attempt to deal with the question, and he does not say one word on the subject at the present moment except this: that he regrets—he, of all people in the world!—that there has been a delay in legislating on this question. He does not announce any intention of dealing with it if he came into power. He says that the temperance party need not hope for legislation in a temperance direction until he has been enabled to repeal the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. I cannot follow that argument. If the case which is represented by the temperance party affects vitally the social condition of the great masses of the people, then, I say, nothing ought to delay legislation on that question, and that there is no reason whatever why legislation which affects the health, the lives, and the morals of millions of individuals in the country ought to be retarded on account of the necessity for a

constitutional organic change in the relations between Ireland and Great Britain. But although Mr. Gladstone was vague, I will, with your permission, not be so vague. I give you my own ideas very briefly on the subject of the reform of the liquor laws. I have (of course I speak for myself)—I have had great and peculiar opportunities of ascertaining what I may well believe to be the tendency—the general prevailing tendency—and disposition of the mind of the Tory party in Parliament and in the country; and though possibly here and there I may go a little beyond it, still I do not think that I shall be very far out. My own view of the liquor laws is that they are intimately connected with the question of local government. Constitute in your rural districts, as you have in your city districts, a popular representative government, and I think you may hand over to them very large powers for regulating the drink traffic in their districts. But up to this point I am still vague. Perhaps you would say: ‘Would you give to the local authority power to prohibit totally all sale of drink within their district?’ Well, I would and I would not. (Laughter; and a Voice: ‘Let’s have it out.’) In theory I would, and in practice I would not. I do not think you could, if you deal genuinely with the question, withhold from the local authority practically unlimited powers with regard to the drink question, but I would introduce two very salutary checks upon any impulsive or fanatical or hasty action, and they would be checks connected with the pocket. In the first place, I imagine that a great feature of the readjustment of imperial and local burdens would be the total transference, or almost total transference, from imperial authority to local authority of the revenue arising from licences of all kinds. I think that if the revenue which arises from licences for the sale of drink was made an important source of revenue for the local authority, the local authority would not hastily or impulsively or fanatically deprive themselves of a useful source of revenue. After all, gentlemen, the only test that I know of, the only real test of earnestness on any subject, is the pocket. I heard a story the other day of a reverend gentleman—I would not on any account mention to what denomination he belongs, but he is a reverend gentleman—

who owns some house property in a town. He was informed that on this property was a gin-shop in which a great deal of drunkenness, a great deal of disorder, and a great deal of immorality nightly took place. Well, he was very much shocked—horribly shocked—and he immediately went to his solicitor and told him that he must immediately sell the property, and that he would not own it an hour. The solicitor said, ‘Of course, sir, it is my business to carry out your instructions, but I had better remind you before doing so that the property in question pays eight per cent., and that if I were to sell the property and invest the money I could not get more than four per cent.’ ‘Oh,’ said the reverend gentleman, ‘I will think about it; I will go home and consult my wife.’ And he did; and the solicitor has never heard anything more about that gin-shop. I do not know whether the moral of the story is very edifying, but after all it is only human nature. When you are legislating about subjects which interest human beings, it is just as well not to leave altogether out of account human nature; and I cannot help thinking that a properly devised check which affects the pocket would control fanaticism with regard to the prohibition of the sale of liquor. But there is one more check. I think that the total prohibition of the sale of liquor would be attended with evil. I can imagine a district where the large majority of the people were firmly persuaded of the evil of the sale of intoxicating liquor and were prepared to prohibit it. I can imagine a county council elected for the purpose of prohibiting all sale of drink within the district. But I can go farther, and I can imagine such an amount of inconvenience, of annoyance, of vexation, and discomfort of every kind arising to individuals from restrictions of that kind, that by the time the next county council was elected a majority would be returned in favour of the unrestricted sale of drink, and the decision of the former council would be entirely reversed. Therefore you might have the most violent fluctuations of law with regard to the sale of drink—a series of reactions: sometimes a popular vote in favour of total abstinence, and perhaps in a year or two a reaction in favour of the most unrestricted sale. Therefore it seems absolutely

necessary to devise a still more forcible check on fanatical dealings with the sale of drink, and I would suggest this—that wherever the establishments for the sale of liquor are abolished in a sweeping and in a rapid manner, there ought at once to come in the question of compensation of vested interests. A scale should be devised and applied to regulate where compensation should apply, and to what extent. No doubt great controversy would arise as to where the compensation should come in ; but that compensation in some form would have to come in somewhere, and ought to come in somewhere, I have no doubt whatever. But, subject to those two restrictions, gentlemen, I frankly say I am in favour of legislation in the direction of temperance. I do not advocate it on moral grounds, because it would not be my business to do so ; others can do so better than I. I advocate it on economic grounds. There can be no question that an enormous amount of the crime in the United Kingdom springs from the unrestricted sale of drink. I was talking the other day to a police magistrate in a very crowded part of London—a practical man of the world, for whose opinion I have the highest respect, and he told me at least two-thirds of all the crime that came before him arose from the unrestricted sale of drink—what I may call the fatal facility of recourse to the public-house and the gin-shop. What is the effect of that ? The effect of that is, that we have to maintain a large criminal population in our prisons, which is an immense burden upon the community, because the population of our prisons is utterly unremunerative. Not only do they bring in nothing, but if that population was not in the prisons, if they were not a criminal population, they would be active workers contributing to the welfare of the community ; so that the loss is a double one. It is the expenditure involved in their useless maintenance, and it is the loss which the community sustains from their labour not being available for the good of the community. Therefore any legislation which would diminish—as I believe sensible temperance legislation would—the criminal population in our prisons would really be legislation of a highly economical character. But I have yet to put another question still more important. The amount of money the British people

spend on drink yearly is something enormous. I forget the exact amount, but it certainly exceeds a hundred millions. Now imagine if by some reasonable and wise legislation we could diminish the facility of recourse to public-houses and gin-shops, what a very large proportion of these millions would be diverted from the liquor trade and would flow to other trades and industries. All trades would benefit. More food would be purchased, and better kinds of food. More clothing would be purchased, and better kinds of clothing. More furniture would be purchased, and better kinds of furniture. More education would be given to children, and a better kind of education. In every way in which money could be diverted from expenditure on the liquor trade, the other trades of the country would benefit. In these days of bad trade and hard times, we cannot, if we are wise, afford to neglect any means which may justly and legitimately stimulate the trade and industry of Britain. I think you will admit that I have been much more frank and distinct on the question of liquor laws than Mr. Gladstone. It is quite possible I have some friends sitting near me with whom I may get into a little hot water with regard to what I have said. I have been unfortunate in getting very often into hot water with some of my Tory friends. Still I believe that the opinions I have put before you are not immoderate opinions. I believe they are not unwise opinions. I believe they are practical and safe opinions.

Mr. Gladstone alluded to the question of Disestablishment, to what he called religious equality, and here again he was more vague and more ambiguous than ever. He was not only ambiguous, but I think he was disingenuous; and if I did not wish to be extremely respectful to him I should say that his treatment of the Disestablishment question was immoral; because, how did he treat the great and solemn question involved in the maintenance or abolition of the connection between Church and State? He treats it as nothing more or less than as a question of political and electoral legerdemain. He divided it into two or three heads. He talked of the Welsh Church and the necessity for disestablishment in Wales. He talked of the Scotch Church and the demand for disestablishment in Scotland; but by some inexplicable process, perfectly peculiar to himself, he mixed up

the two questions of Home Rule and of Disestablishment. He argued that Wales ought to receive disestablishment as a boon because it returned more Home Rulers proportionately, and therefore disestablishers, than Scotland, which was rather lukewarm and rather Laodicean in its demand for Home Rule, which had not returned anything like so large a proportion of Home Rulers, and therefore disestablishers. Can you conceive anything more improper? He mixes up two questions which are totally distinct. He uses, as it were, the disestablishment of the Church, a great and solemn question, as a bribe by which to gain support for his Repeal policy. But on the question of English disestablishment he was worse than on the question of Scotch and Welsh disestablishment. He did not say, and he did not give the smallest hint, whether he was in favour of it or whether he was against it. All he said was, he could not do everything at the same time. He said: 'You may agitate for it; I will not necessarily oppose it. You may get it for all I care, but everything cannot be done at the same time. You cannot drive six omnibuses abreast through Temple Bar.' Now, I ask you, gentlemen—and there are many here who are not by any means partisans of the Tories—I dare say there are some in this hall who are followers of Mr. Gladstone—I ask them, Do they think that that is a proper or decent way of treating before the people of England so great and so solemn a question? How can you place unlimited confidence in a man who treats the gravest question in such a manner? I will not go into the question of Church and State to-night. I content myself with expressing my own opinion, which, I believe, is the opinion of almost the entire Unionist party, that I am distinctly hostile to disestablishment either in Wales or in Scotland or in England. I believe firmly, and I do not think anything will ever change my conviction, that the work which has been done by the Church among the masses of the people is a great and a sacred work, that it is being pursued with ever-increasing activity, that the connection of the Church with the State gives to that work greater vigour, greater authority, and greater independence than it would otherwise possess; and I am certain that nothing but the most unmitigated evil and disaster can possibly flow from



any appropriation of ecclesiastical property to secular purposes. We have had some experience in this question of Disestablishment. Look at Ireland. We were told the disestablishment of the Irish Church would heal the woes and pacify the grievances of Ireland, that it would elevate the condition of the people. Has it done so? Has the appropriation of the property of the Irish Church to secular purposes increased material prosperity in that country? I cannot see that any great, tangible, practical, undeniable national benefits have followed from the disestablishment of the Irish Church. It is a matter of opinion, but I see nothing in past legislation to tempt us farther on the road of plunder of ecclesiastical establishments.

I have dealt with nearly all the questions which Mr. Gladstone alluded to, but I must point out to you two omissions in Mr. Gladstone's programme. Not one word, not one sentence was there in that lengthy speech which referred to the greatest of all questions—the question of economy, the question of financial retrenchment and of departmental reform. I have special and peculiar reasons for being disappointed at that omission. I think it is a most grave omission, one which the people ought to take the most serious notice of, because it is obvious that it must have been intentional, and that in his programme for the future legislation or development of the country, if the work was committed to him, economy or retrenchment find no place. There was another most remarkable omission. He said nothing whatever about popular education—not a word. Elementary education in the aspect which now interests the masses of the people—I mean free education—found no place in Mr. Gladstone's programme. On the question of free education I have thought much, and I have long been of opinion that it is very difficult indeed to combine compulsory attendance of children at elementary schools with the compulsory payment of fees by the parents of the children. I think that the duty of the State is to remove every obstacle, to provide every reasonable facility for getting the children of England into the schools in England. And if it is found, as I think it may be found, in some parts, perhaps in many parts, that the payment of fees is not only a great obstacle to education but a great hardship on

the struggling and labouring poor, then I think an effort should be made to relieve these persons from the payment of fees. I do not see much difficulty in the matter. I do not think the position of voluntary schools need be affected. It would be quite possible to take over on to the Consolidated Fund the whole amount now paid by parents of children for fees in elementary schools. The sum is not a very large one, nothing appalling or alarming; and it would be quite possible for the State to repay to all schools which were free the amount which those schools would have derived from the receipt of fees. I see no difficulty in that, nor do I think it would injure the position of denominational schools, which confer enormous benefit upon the community. I may be told that such legislation is not economically sound. I dispute the proposition altogether. As with temperance legislation, so with educational legislation—the more you extend it the more you will diminish your criminal population, the more you will encourage thrift and morality of every kind, the more you will, I believe, develop a disposition to struggle against adversity, the more you will raise the social condition of the people throughout the land. It is truly economic legislation; all the money you lay out wisely on education will be repaid to you one hundredfold. I will go further and say that legislation for the purpose of bringing education freely to every child in England is the truest Conservative legislation. If by temperance legislation or educational legislation you can increase the material prosperity of English homes, you have done nearly all that you can for the happiness of the people throughout the country.

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Mr. Gladstone—upon what I hold to be an utterly untenable assumption, that the difficulties in connection with Irish government are, under the present arrangements, insuperable and permanent—calls upon you to allow him to fabricate a totally new Constitution for the United Kingdom, the main feature of which is the abolition in its present form of the Parliament at Westminster, and the substitution in its place of two Parliaments and two Governments for the United Kingdom. That is Mr. Gladstone's proposal. He argues to this effect,

that the United Kingdom is not really united, and cannot be united, until the United Kingdom is governed by two Parliaments and two Governments, practically independent of each other, each going its own way, and in all probability disputing and quarrelling, and even fighting, with each other. Only the mind of Mr. Gladstone could evolve union out of such an arrangement. He might as well argue that the felicity and perfect comfort of married life is only to be found in divorce. On that argument, on that extraordinary assumption, Mr. Gladstone offers to the English people, to the Scotch people, and to the Irish people, to provide them with a totally new Constitution, which, he claims, will sweep away as if by magic all the difficulties in Ireland which we have to contend with. I can well understand persons saying to Mr. Gladstone: 'You tell us you are going to remove the great difficulties of government in Ireland; but let us know your remedy; let us have your whole plan before us before we consent to so large a change as you propose; let us know exactly what you mean to do, and then we shall be able to say whether we can support your policy or not.' I can understand that frame of mind. But what does Mr. Gladstone say to that demand? He says, 'That is a demand I cannot comply with. You have got to leave the whole matter in my hands, leave it absolutely to my judgment. If I was to explain to you beforehand my plan, by which I propose to establish a new Constitution consisting of two Parliaments and two Governments, I should utterly destroy all the hopes I have of carrying that Constitution into effect. I shall tell you nothing about it.' That is what he says to the people of England, what he has said ever since the last election, and what he said last night at Nottingham. 'I shall tell you nothing about it. You must give me a docile majority and unlimited power, and you must trust implicitly to me to provide you with a first-class article. That is the demand which he makes. Remember what is at stake. This is no ordinary law which Mr. Gladstone seeks to pass. This is no ordinary reform such as political conflict has arisen over before. It is something widely different. It is an immense modification, it is almost a total transformation, of the Constitution of the United

Kingdom. It is a change which affects not only the thirty-six millions of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, but which also affects directly and immediately the three hundred millions of people who depend upon the Government, upon the Parliament, upon the strength of the United Kingdom. That is the nature of this business, and you are asked gravely by Mr. Gladstone to confide the whole management of this affair to him, and to him alone; and he utterly and resolutely refuses to give the people the smallest information or indication as to the manner in which he intends to carry the change into effect. Now I will reason, if I may, from private affairs, because there is an analogy between private affairs and public affairs. This town of Sunderland contains, and is surrounded by, a great number of large manufacturing and commercial establishments in which millions of capital are embarked and hundreds and thousands of hands are employed. Times are bad, and difficulties arise in connection with the carrying on of business at a profit. I ask you who are connected with the management of any of these establishments: suppose a man comes to you and says, 'The way in which you carry on your business is altogether wrong; it must be totally changed and transformed—the whole system of your business. If you will change and transform it, instead of returning you 10 per cent. or 5 per cent. it shall return you 50 per cent.' If you were to say in reply, 'That is very interesting and alluring, but would you kindly tell me the details of the changes which you propose to institute in my business?' Suppose he said, 'Oh, no, that is impossible; you must leave the whole plan to my judgment; you must give over the whole of your business to me, and trust implicitly to the arrangement I will make.' Well, now, what would any one who was a practical manager do with a fellow who talked to him like that? I think he would kick him off the premises as an impostor and a knave. There is an analogy between such a private matter as I have put before you and this great national matter, the Repeal of the Union. And is it not curious that there are people in private affairs who would denounce such a demand as utterly lunatic and criminal, and yet in public affairs are prepared blindly and unreflectingly to concede such a demand? The English and

Scotch people are proverbially hard-headed people. I cannot forget that the men of the North Country have a special and peculiar reputation for hard-headedness and businesslike and practical modes of managing their affairs. Is it within the range of possibility—surely it is not within the range of possibility—that the British democracy, that the hard-headed men of the North should confide the whole of their political fortunes and the future destinies of the empire to one man, without possessing beforehand from that one man the clearest knowledge and the most precise information as to the use which he intends to make of the power when he gets it? And yet, what is the position? Mr. Gladstone says, ‘I will establish two Parliaments, two Governments, in the United Kingdom. The rest you must leave to me. What shall be the relation of these two Parliaments to each other, what shall be the precise powers and limits to the respective action of these Parliaments, I will not tell you. If you ask me I will say you are laying a trap into which I won’t walk.’ ‘Whether I will deal finally with the land question in Ireland by means of the tax-payers’ money or remit that question to the Irish Parliament, I won’t tell you. If you ask me, you are laying a trap into which I won’t walk.’ ‘Whether I will deal separately with the province of Ulster, or hand over the province of Ulster to the Irish Parliament, I won’t tell you. It is the worst of all the traps which you are trying to lay for me in asking the question.’ ‘Whether the Irish members of Parliament shall remain at Westminster, whether Ireland shall be represented at Westminster or not, or whether Irish representation at Westminster shall cease, I decline to tell you. It is another of those diabolical traps which my opponents are laying for me in every direction.’ ‘You must leave all these matters,’ he says, ‘which I admit to be matters of the most profound importance, absolutely to my judgment and my discretion.’ His judgment and his discretion! The judgment and discretion of ‘the old pilot!’ I will not detain you this evening by examining the record of the old pilot during the years 1880 to 1885. It is sufficient to say that the old pilot’s idea of pilotage was to discern wherever he could a rock upon the ocean and to steer the ship of State right upon that rock.

You have had some experience of his skill and judgment in dealing with this question and in fabricating a new Constitution. You recollect that in 1886, without the authority of the people—without, as it were, the knowledge of the people, taking the people by surprise—he produced a plan for the establishment in the United Kingdom of two Parliaments and two Governments. That plan was found to be so bad, so nonsensical, so utterly ridiculous, that it was decisively rejected by the Parliament in which he had a majority, and still more decisively rejected by the country. And yet, in spite of that experience, he still comes before the English people and claims from them unlimited powers. He says his former plans are dead, thereby admitting them to be bad plans. He says he will produce a fresh plan, and calls upon the people to give him unlimited power in order that he may make another try at setting up two Parliaments and two Governments for the United Kingdom. Before you listen to that demand, if you are reasonable and intelligent, as I know you to be, you are bound to force him to lay his whole plan before you. Remember that if you ever give him a majority, you have very little power until Parliament comes before you again. Therefore you should be most careful, in so large a matter, to know exactly where you are going and exactly what use is going to be made of the power you confer. I pray you, do not lose yourselves in the mazes of Irish history. I pray you not to yield yourselves up to maudlin sentiment over Irish wrongs and Irish woes. What you have got to do is to call upon these men to explain themselves, to expound to you their remedies. Say to them, ‘Show us your plan before you expect us to be a party to your policy, before you expect us to give you the power to carry that policy into effect.’ You must force these men, these Repealers, to descend from those altitudes of sentiment and bogus humanitarianism in which they wander. You must force them to emerge from that cloud and mist of the rights of man and the rights of nationalities in which they delight to hide themselves. You must force them to explain their paradoxical notion that union is only to be found in separation, and that national prosperity can only be created by anarchy and by crime. Bring them down, gentle-

men, to the common level ground of plain matter-of-fact business. Make them show you their hands, explain to you their entire remedy, and disclose to you their plan in all detail. If such a line is adopted by the people of England as a body, and adhered to, then I am sure that the genius of Britain, which shivers and shatters nonsense and imposture of every kind, will penetrate and reject the tinselled theories and the gaudy policies in which Repealers revel, and will guide the democracy along the path of national honour, of public credit, of imperial might and renown—the path which our fathers consistently trod, and which we and our sons in turn must tread.

## THE 'REVOLUTIONARY PARTY.'

NEWCASTLE, OCTOBER 22, 1887.

[In the following speech the main facts connected with several cases of alleged outrage in Ireland, such as the Kinsella case and the Mitchelstown affray, were minutely examined, in reply to statements which had just been made by Mr. Gladstone. These comments, on what may be regarded as incidents of transitory importance, are now omitted. The remaining portions of the speech have a permanent interest.]

IN the course of this week the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Gladstone, has arraigned before the people of this country the Unionist party, her Majesty's Ministers, and he has especially arraigned the action of the Irish Executive Government. He has brought an indictment against them; he has tried them; and he has found them guilty. And he calls upon the people of England to take a similar course. Now I am not going this afternoon to put in any plea for any arrest of judgment against the indictment of Mr. Gladstone. I am going to try, if you will allow me, to meet that indictment on every point, and to claim from you and from the people of this county and outside this county a complete and perfect acquittal on all the charges which Mr. Gladstone brings. Mr. Gladstone based his indictment at Nottingham mainly upon two grounds. He indicted the Government and the Unionist party for having adopted in their treatment of Ireland what he called a policy of coercion; and the second ground on which he based his indictment was the administration of the law by the Irish Executive. Now it is a favourite topic with Radical speakers—it is a topic which has often been urged before Newcastle audiences by Mr. Morley—that the Tory party are prone to coercion, and that they had exhibited



that proneness by precipitately recurring at the earliest opportunity in their government of Ireland to what Mr. Morley called 'the days of dark and tyrannous Toryism.' I merely repeat that expression without examining it. I look upon it as a wide stretch of the rhetorical faculty. I should rather be inclined to think Mr. Morley means by that expression a method of government which fifty years ago was in accordance with the public opinion of that time, but which would not be in accordance with the public opinion of the present day. I think that is a more sensible way of putting it. But let me examine this charge that the Tory party and the Unionist party have hastily recurred to methods of tyrannical and arbitrary government. What is the recent history of the Tory Government? When, in 1885, Mr. Gladstone's Government fell, a Tory Government acceded to office; and what did they do? They found that crime was diminishing in Ireland, and that order was increasing in Ireland. They knew that the Irish were about to exercise, with much greater latitude than had ever been the case before, the franchise for the election of a new Parliament, and they determined that, in order that no unnecessary or irritating grievance should annoy the Irish mind, and prejudice the Irish mind against the connection with England—they determined, though undoubtedly the decision was a most anxious and responsible one, that they would make an effort to govern Ireland without renewing the special criminal law which Mr. Gladstone had found necessary. Therefore there was no precipitate or hurried recourse to the 'dark and tyrannous days of Toryism' then. There were two things which the Government of that day did not foresee, did not know—one thing which they could not have known, and one which they could hardly have known. The Government of that day could never have foreseen, and could not possibly have known, that Mr. Gladstone would in so short a time have given his adhesion to the cause of the Repeal of the Union—a step which on his part has immeasurably strengthened the forces of sedition and of disorder in Ireland; and, furthermore, the Government of that day did not know the wide extent and the formidable organisation of the National League in Ireland. Owing to these two causes—the power of the National League,

the desperate manner in which it was used, and also to the adoption by Mr. Gladstone of a policy of Home Rule—the honest, *bonâ fide* effort which the Tory Government of 1885 made to govern Ireland by the ordinary law broke down, and in January 1886, although the Government knew that their tenure of power could only be counted by days and by hours, they came before Parliament, and they committed themselves without hesitation, without calculation, solely from honest motives, and from actual knowledge which they possessed, to a policy of strengthening the law in Ireland. So much for that Government. It went out of office in January, and a brief interval took place, in which Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister; and in August 1886 Mr. Gladstone left office, and again a Tory Government succeeded him. What did the Tory Government do? Was there any hasty or precipitate recourse to ‘the dark and tyrannous days of Toryism’? Did the Tory Government immediately ask Parliament for any special criminal law? They did not. And why? Because, although they knew that the state of Ireland was disturbed—although they knew that the administration of law in Ireland was attended with the utmost difficulty—still they did hope, and they had reason to hope, that the alliance which had been formed between the party of Mr. Gladstone and the party of Mr. Parnell—mischievous as they held that alliance to be to all the interests of the country—still they had reason to hope that at any rate it would have this effect, that respect for the Constitution would lead Mr. Gladstone and his followers to restrain the revolutionary party of Mr. Parnell, and would keep the agitation for the Repeal of the Union and the agitation on the subject of Irish land within the bounds of the law. At any rate, there was no precipitate recourse to arbitrary measures of government. That plan, that hope, that intention broke down like the former one; and what was the determining factor which caused that policy to break down? It was the Plan of Campaign. The Plan of Campaign was precisely similar in all its incidents and in all its character to what you are well acquainted with under the name of the No-rent Manifesto of 1881. There was a precise similarity between the No-rent Manifesto of the Land League in 1881 and the Plan

of Campaign of the National League in 1887. Both denoted action of this kind, that it was an illegal withholding of legal obligations by violent resistance to the process of the law and by intimidation of the Queen's subjects. That was the Plan of Campaign, that was the No-rent Manifesto; they were similar in their incidents and their aims. Why do I make this close comparison between the Plan of Campaign and the No-rent Manifesto? For this reason, that Mr. Gladstone the other day at Derby had the temerity to assert that the reason why he could not be attacked by us on account of his having resorted to coercive measures for the government of Ireland when he was in office was because the Irish party of to-day had totally changed from the Irish party of that day. As well might you expect the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard his spots. Mr. Gladstone argued that when he had recourse to coercion in 1881 the Irish party had made a dangerous and a violently illegal attack upon property by means of the No-rent Manifesto. As a matter of fact, Mr. Gladstone's statement is historically incorrect; because we must recollect that Mr. Gladstone during his tenure of office from 1880 to 1885 brought in two Coercion Bills, and the first Coercion Bill preceded the No-rent Manifesto by several months. Not only so, but that great and memorable denunciation of the Land League which Mr. Gladstone uttered at Leeds, and which he referred to the other day at Derby, when he denounced the Land League as a body of men whose objects were public plunder, and who were marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the empire—that denunciation preceded the No-rent Manifesto. There was this difference between the No-rent Manifesto and the Plan of Campaign—a difference against Mr. Gladstone, and in favour of the present Government—that the No-rent Manifesto was no sooner issued than it was disavowed by the Irish Land League. Moreover, the No-rent Manifesto was not acted upon by the people of Ireland. The payment of rent after the No-rent Manifesto proceeded with difficulty, as it had proceeded with difficulty before the No-rent Manifesto. The No-rent Manifesto, for all practical purposes connected with order in Ireland, made hardly any difference at all to the

Government of the day. But what of the Plan of Campaign? The Plan of Campaign of last winter was not only not disavowed by the National League, but it was avowed by the leaders of the National League as their plan. It was not only avowed: it was gloried in. It was not only gloried in: it was preached all over Ireland; and not only that, but, differing again from the No-rent Manifesto, the Plan of Campaign was widely acted on by the Irish tenantry.

I have shown you that Mr. Gladstone had recourse to coercion for Ireland before the No-rent Manifesto; I have shown you that the present Government did not have recourse to coercion for Ireland until after the wide adoption of the Plan of Campaign. Look at the importance of the difference. Mr. Gladstone says our strongest charge against him is that he resorted to precisely similar methods for governing Ireland as we do now, and he says he has dismissed that charge and shattered it by his argument that the nature of the Irish party had changed. I have shown you that the nature of the Irish party is the same, as judged by a comparison between the Plan of Campaign and the No-rent Manifesto; and further I have shown you that this Tory Government which Mr. Morley charges with being so ready, so precipitate, in having recourse to the 'days of dark and tyrannous Toryism,' has exhibited to the Irish people far more patience, far more forbearance, far more reluctance to resort to extreme measures than did the Government of which Mr. Gladstone was the head. But I will not yet leave the subject. Mr. Gladstone avers that the Irish party has changed—that their objects are more moderate, and that their methods are different and more legal. I assert—and I challenge contradiction—that the National League of the present day and the Land League of Mr. Gladstone's day are one and the same body; that they do not differ in the slightest respect. What proof would I bring of that assertion? I do not go to Sir William Harcourt. He is the last witness I would call. And therefore I do not go to him and quote his saying when he was a Minister of the Crown that the National League was the apostolic successor to the Land League. I put him aside, and go to a more credible and more recent witness—I mean

Mr. Michael Davitt. Only the other day—about three weeks ago—Mr. Michael Davitt, addressing the people of Cork, and through them the people of Ireland, said that the National League and the Land League were one and the same body, that they had not changed, that their objects were the same, that their methods were the same, that their officers were the same, and their members the same. Now, who is likely to know most about the National League? Mr. Davitt or Mr. Gladstone? And in the face of the assertion of Mr. Davitt, what becomes of Mr. Gladstone's contention that the Irish party have changed their methods and their objects. Now, let us see how far we have got. We have established the absolute identity of the National League and the Land League, and we have got Mr. Gladstone's admission, made at Derby the other day, that his coercion of the Land League was right and justifiable. We have established the absolute similarity between the Plan of Campaign and the No-rent Manifesto, and we have got Mr. Gladstone's assertion, made at Derby the other day, that the No-rent Manifesto was an action of dangerous and violent illegality. And we have got to this: that whereas Mr. Gladstone applied to Parliament for coercion before the No-rent Manifesto, and at a time when the No-rent Manifesto had not been acted on by the people of Ireland—had not, indeed, been issued—the present Government did not apply to Parliament for special powers until after the Plan of Campaign had been initiated, and at a time when the Plan of Campaign was being dangerously acted upon among the Irish people. In the face of this, what becomes of Mr. Gladstone's indictment against the Government and the Unionist party that we have resorted to coercion on insufficient ground? There is one more accusation which I am anxious to deal with. Mr. Gladstone declares that the Unionist party at the last election pledged themselves before the people of England that they would have no recourse to coercion in Ireland. I declare that that accusation is unfounded. I defy Mr. Gladstone or any of his followers to quote from one single speech or address of any leading member of the Unionist party at the last election one single sentence or opinion which, by any stretch of imagination or any exercise of ingenuity, could be twisted into a pledge

that the Unionist party would not have recourse to coercion for the government of Ireland. I know that there is no such declaration to be found. I say there is no single leader of the Unionist party who gave such a pledge as Mr. Gladstone described. The accusation is nonsensical on the face of it. What was the issue before the country in 1886? It was whether the country would adhere to the old policy or go in for the new. The old policy was the policy of maintaining the Union. The new policy was the policy of repealing the Union. Both policies involved coercion under certain circumstances. The policy of maintaining the Union involved the possibility, nay, even the probability, of having to ask Parliament for extraordinary powers to repress and control the National League. But the policy of repealing the Union involved the absolute certainty of the Irish Parliament arming their Government with extra powers for the coercion of Ulster. The coercion of the Protestant community of Ulster is a far more wicked, far more unjustifiable, and a far more brutal kind of coercion than any which the present Government can be supposed to be guilty of.

I come to the second point, which is perhaps more important, and which certainly involves newer topics. I come to Mr. Gladstone's indictment against the administration of the law in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone has averred that the law as administered in Ireland is disagreeable, and indeed odious, to the Irish people; and he said it is no wonder it is disagreeable and odious to the Irish people, and he proceeds to adduce certain illustrations to show why it should be odious and disagreeable to the Irish people. I will take these illustrations and examine them. But first he makes a general assertion, and says that owing to the action of the Government there is no freedom of speech in Ireland. Is there not? We will test that assertion by actual fact. About a fortnight ago there was a meeting in the Rotunda, at Dublin, which was attended by the Nationalist party; and I have no reason to suppose there was any Government reporter at the meeting, and I am certain no prosecution followed the speeches delivered. But I am going to give you some gems out of the speeches which were delivered at that meeting, to show that a very considerable freedom of speech does

exist in Ireland—much more freedom than any of us would permit ourselves here. Mr. Dillon was speaking on the Coercion Act, and he said: 'The Lord Mayor and Mr. William O'Brien would continue to publish, in defiance of the seventh clause, ay, and of the whole Act, the full proceedings and the resolutions of every suppressed branch in Ireland if they were men enough to hold their meetings and pass their resolutions. They had set the Act at open defiance, and invited the Government to put them down if they could and if they dared; and he said in the name of the Irish Press there was not a newspaper that called itself National, from Cape Clear to Antrim, that would not continue to publish the proceedings of the suppressed National League branches in defiance of the clause in the Act, and let the Castle do its worst.' There is not much restraint there. But Mr. Dillon improves on that. He goes on to say, alluding to the evictions at Gweedore and to the action of the Roman Catholic priest in stimulating the people to resist the police at Gweedore: 'Be it crime or no crime, he told them to face the police again and resist them. What was the result of Father M'Fadden's action? A more instructive lesson had never been taught the people of Ireland. Father M'Fadden faced the police, and drove them and the magistrates in charge of them out of Donegal.' Not much want of liberty in that. I go on. Mr. Dillon further says: 'The moral of that was that every tenant in Ireland who had the heart of a man in his breast should take his stand upon his hearth and fight as long as his arm had strength in it for his home.' I am not saying whether these sentiments are right or wrong. All I say is, that if sentiments of that kind can be delivered at a public meeting in the capital of Ireland, without the smallest interference by the Government, what becomes of Mr. Gladstone's charge that there is no freedom of speech in Ireland? I have only one more quotation. 'It was the national resolve,' said Mr. O'Brien at the same meeting, 'to defy that infamous and abominable Act'—that is, the law of the land agreed to by Parliament—'to defy that infamous and abominable Act, and to obstruct it and defeat it in every possible way, and to hold it up to public ridicule, hatred, and contempt. Their determination was to

kick Balfour's proclamation from one end of Ireland to the other, just as the Mitchelstown boys kicked the helmets of the police from the market-square.' I do not think, after what I have read to you, and knowing that these speeches were delivered without the smallest interference by the Government, that any man in England, except the most rabid and most hopeless partisan of Repeal, will say that freedom of speech is interfered with in Ireland. We are told that there is not a free press in Ireland. Is there not? I have not fortified myself to-day with copies of 'United Ireland.' In every edition of 'United Ireland,' which comes out twice or thrice a week, you will find the paper is filled with the wildest accusations, and the most unrestrained and abominable and revolting accusations, against the present Government, of every sort and kind, and not one of those papers has been prosecuted or will be prosecuted on account of the accusations against the Government which they contain. How can it be said that there is no free press in Ireland? Writers in the Irish press may write, and do write, exactly what they please against the Government. No language is too violent for them to use; no language, however violent, as long as it is just an expression of opinion, will entail prosecution; but when a newspaper deliberately sets itself to break the law of the land, as agreed to by Parliament, an Irish newspaper, just like an English newspaper under similar circumstances, would be brought either before a magistrate or a jury.

[The speaker, having replied to some statements made by Mr. Gladstone concerning some alleged abuses committed by the police authorities in Ireland, proceeded to defend the police in London from Mr. Gladstone's reflections upon them.]

I must say a word about the police. What I say of the police in London applies to the police in Newcastle, or any other large town in the country. The duties of the police in any large town are of the most arduous, anxious, and responsible character. I take London alone. Look at the smallness of the number of police in London compared to the population of London. I think the police in London only number about fourteen thousand, among a population of five millions. Look at their duties: they have not only to look after the property of



the citizens, they have not only to watch closely over that numerous criminal class which resides in every large town. They have to look after those societies which exist in England, supported from America, for purposes connected with the use of dynamite. I know from my own official knowledge that there are agents of these societies in many of our large towns on whom the police have a watch. I know of an escape of the English people from a disaster of unprecedented magnitude in 1883—an escape by a hair's breadth, and an escape brought about only by the uncommon watchfulness of the police. But, in addition to all that, the police in London have now to watch closely those Socialist associations which exist, and which seem to exist, for no other purpose than to cause riot and disorder. And surely a body of faithful public servants, who have performed and are performing duties of so terribly anxious, so terribly responsible a nature—surely they are entitled to the generous appreciation of the British public, surely they have a right to be protected from the hasty, from the unreflecting censure of one who, only a few months ago, was Prime Minister of the country and responsible for the peace of the whole realm.

I wish now to discover as briefly as I may the reason of this attitude on the part of Mr. Gladstone towards the police generally throughout the United Kingdom. It is not an attitude which he would have taken up a year ago. What is the reason of the changed attitude on the part of Mr. Gladstone towards the police of the United Kingdom? That examination opens up one of the most serious aspects of the policy of Repeal. It opens up this question, What has been the effect on Mr. Gladstone and his following of their alliance and fusion with a party which is distinctly a revolutionary party? What is the difference between a constitutional party and a revolutionary party? A constitutional party works as the Tories and the Radicals have worked in this country for years past—it works by public discussion, by orderly agitation, by the use of argument, by petitions of every kind, and by other legal methods. That is a constitutional party. What is a revolutionary party? A revolutionary party is a party which, like the party of Mr. Parnell, discards all the methods of a constitutional party, and

relies solely on methods of public disorder, constant disturbance of the peace, violent and forcible resistance to all processes and forms of law. That is a revolutionary party. And the effect upon Mr. Gladstone and his followers of their alliance, their fusion with a revolutionary party has been that instead of their making, as the Government hoped, a revolutionary party constitutional, the revolutionary party is making them revolutionary. Their alliance with the revolutionary party has eliminated their constitutional disposition, and has forced them to aim at revolutionary objects and to work by revolutionary methods. That will show why this onslaught is being made by the party of Repeal upon the police of the United Kingdom. On that I have got to say that if, for the future, political changes and political reforms of any kind are to be effected, not by constitutional agitation, but by disorder, by disturbance, by violent resistance to all forms and processes of law—if that is to be the future of our political life, then farewell, a long farewell to all commercial progress of any kind—farewell, a long farewell to all hope and all prosperity of revived trade and industry in England. What is the secret of the colossal wealth and power of the British Empire? I hold it to be this—that for a space of two hundred years revolutionary forces in this country have been kept under, that public opinion has never tolerated the exercise of revolutionary forces, for the Government of the day have always been supported by public opinion in putting down and keeping under revolutionary forces. But depend upon it that the moment these revolutionary forces, which must exist in all great communities, escape from control; the moment that they think, or have reason to believe, any large proportion of public opinion, or that any important political party will tolerate, or will excuse, or will justify the disorder which they cause, then you may be certain that the sun of British prosperity, of British wealth, of British commercial greatness, will set for ever. You may imagine to yourselves what would follow if the revolutionary forces got the upper hand. All enterprise would be checked, all commerce would be contracted, factories and workshops would be closed, labour would be unemployed, wages would fall. The fact is that the escape of the revolutionary forces

from control would not affect what Mr. Gladstone calls the classes—at any rate would affect them far less than the masses of the people. The classes possess capital. Capital can take to itself wings and flee away. But what will be the condition of the working men of this country, what will be the condition of their families and their homes when disorder and anarchy shall have taken the place of authority and law? I have specially alluded to this matter in language as strong as I could bring to bear, because I think it ought to attract the attention of working men. There is no more serious aspect of the Repeal movement than the tendency which it seems to show that the revolutionary forces are endeavouring to escape from the control under which they have been kept for over two hundred years. Will the democracy of England be quick enough to discern the danger and guard against it while there is time? I confess that I am startled and alarmed at the fact that the majority of the electors of this great city, and indeed of the North of England generally, should have given in their adhesion to the Repeal of the Union. It may be that our exuberant wealth, our bounding and swelling prosperity in times not long ago, our rapid annexations of territory and acquisitions of empire, our measureless commerce, our proud marine, have blunted the perceptions and dulled the energies of our race, and have led us to believe that we may lightly acquiesce in any political experiment, any organic change. Yet surely there are moments when we must realise that England, surrounded as she is by mighty States disposing of innumerable armies, is not invulnerable, that her resources are not inexhaustible, and that there is no certainty that her empire should endure for ever and for ay. Other empires as wide and great as ours have waxed and waned, other States as powerful and as wealthy as ours have risen and have sunk into the ocean of the past; and it may be that the time is inscribed upon the book of fate when the busy marts, the crowded streets, the bustling factories of this living city shall be as desolate as the ruins of Thebes, as silent and as mournful as the courts of the palaces of the Mogul. Who will dare pronounce? But of this I am certain, that if such is the inevitable fate of our empire, history will unerringly decide

that the knell of our glory and might was earliest tolled on the day when the people relaxed their firm grip of the noble principle of the Union and feebly and fatally followed the broad and downward path of separation ; on the day when popular cowardice was substituted for civic courage ; when surrender to rebellion, treason, and sedition was disguised under the specious pretexts of concession, conciliation, philanthropy, and the rights of nationalities ; when order, law, and loyalty to authority had ceased to be the watchwords of the community and were no longer the bulwarks of the State. It may be neither right nor wise nor profitable thus to speculate upon or pry into the mysteries of the future ; but should these anticipations, founded upon the mutability of institutions and the spirit of decay which pervades all human arrangements, not wander far from actual eventuality, then I am confident that it will also be recorded that the Unionist party had striven hard and long and to the last to avert the doom, and that they are innocent and guiltless of all responsibility for a calamity which will shock mankind and change the world itself.

## 'FAIR TRADE.'

STOCKTON, OCTOBER 24, 1887.

[In 1885 a Royal Commission was appointed by Lord Salisbury's Government to inquire into the causes of depression of trade. It was presided over by Lord Iddesleigh. Mr. Goschen and other leading Liberals refused to take any part in this inquiry, but a large mass of evidence was produced, and ultimately the majority of the Commission made a report which, upon the whole, was unfavourable to the Fair Traders. Lord Randolph Churchill felt himself bound to abide by the decision of the main body of the Commission ; and, consequently, in the following speech, he adopted a line more hostile to the policy of placing duties on imported goods than that which he had taken at Blackpool and other places. It ought to be stated that the two gentlemen specially referred to in this speech advocated nothing more than a system under which moderate duties could be laid on fully manufactured foreign goods for revenue purposes.]

**T**HE Irish leaders, you must recollect, have declared in Ireland and in Parliament that by every means in their power they will make the government of Ireland impossible, that they will prevent the Government responsible to the Imperial Parliament at Westminster from governing Ireland ; and they are actively aided and abetted in that policy by the members of the Radical party, and also they receive support from Mr. Gladstone himself. Why ? Because, obviously, if the Irish can succeed in making the government of Ireland impossible, in breaking down the government of Ireland, and in breaking down with it the Government of the Unionist party, then Mr. Gladstone will come before the country, and he will point to the complete breakdown of the Government ; he will declare that all his prophecies had been fulfilled, and he will possibly, he thinks,

obtain from the people of England a perfectly free hand—without any declaration of policy beforehand, without any explanations in detail he will obtain a perfectly free hand for his project of setting up two Parliaments and two Governments in the United Kingdom. The policy is obvious and plain, and you must be on your guard against it, and you must not attach too much importance to these incidental struggles which have taken place, and which possibly will take place, between the police and the people of Ireland. They are mere incidents in the great struggle which is going on in Ireland, on the fate of which order depends not only in Ireland but in your own country—the great struggle between lawlessness and law, between anarchy and order.

There are some people in this country, not necessarily hot partisans, but people of a sentimental and rather weak turn of mind, who are always very much shocked and horrified when a collision takes place between the people and the forces of the Executive Government, and they carry their sentimentality to such an extent that they appear to be under the impression that whenever disorder is threatened the police should give way, and should not attempt to quell the disorder; that under no circumstances whatever should the police and the people ever come into collision. I might point out that the logical result of the definite acceptance of a policy of that kind would be that we might just as well do away with the police altogether, and save ourselves a great deal of expense. But I should like to bring to your notice some examples of what goes on in America, where these opinions are not held as to the iniquity of quelling disorder by force. We know that America is a country of perfect freedom; that we find in America the purest form of democratic government which you could well see. Well, I happened to be looking the other day over an account of some riots which took place in New York in the year 1863. These riots, curiously enough, were Irish riots; and what is still more curious is that, I believe, strictly speaking—speaking from the strictly legal point of view—the Irish were justified in protesting against the action of the Government which led to the riot. What took place was this: the President of the United States, in order to carry on the war, called for an extra

levy of soldiers from the population. I believe that that act on his part was unconstitutional—he certainly did something which was perfectly unconstitutional. He sent the Provost-Marshal of the United States to go into the city of New York to superintend the levy himself. This sending one of the Government officers into the territory of a State which for all State purposes was independent of the Federal Government could only be justified by the great law of public safety. The population of New York submitted to that forced levy, all except the Irish, and the Irish protested; not only protested but rioted; and for four days the city of New York was in possession of a riotous Irish crowd, and a quantity of property was destroyed, and many lives were lost. And then the United States Government thought they would act. So they sent some troops to New York; they did not think the police were quite strong enough, and the troops came into the town, and this is how the action of the troops is described by a person who wrote an account of that riot: ‘The troops were commanded by Captain Putnam, and Captain Putnam placed his guns in position and swept the street with canister, which soon cleared it. Bodies lay thick on the pavement, and in the course of five days over 1,200 Irishmen were killed, and the lesson has not had to be repeated in New York.’ Therefore, you see our friends in America are not squeamish about restoring order when they think it is threatened. But there is another story told about Irish riots at that time. There were riots in Pennsylvania. The police were to some extent overpowered, so General Grant sent General Sheridan into Pennsylvania with troops, and the story goes that General Grant sent for General Sheridan before he started, and said, ‘Have you plenty of grapeshot?’ General Sheridan said that he had, and General Grant said, ‘Then you require no more instructions.’ You may say, ‘Well, that was a long time ago, and under the pressure of a great civil war.’ So it was, but the Americans proceed in exactly the same way at the present day in that purely democratic country where perfect freedom is supposed to prevail, and is looked upon as the highest of all objects. I saw in ‘The Times’ on the 2nd of this month that a meeting had been announced to take place in

New Jersey to protest against the sentence of death passed upon seven Socialists at Chicago. What followed is described in Reuter's telegram—'The police were, however, forewarned, and one hundred and fifty constables occupied the hall where the meeting was to be held'—in order to do what Mr. Gladstone decided the English Government had no right to do—'to prevent the meeting being held.' That was the action of the American police. They would not allow a meeting to be held, called for the purpose of sympathising with men who had been condemned to death. Why? Because the meeting was likely to disturb order. However, let us go on. 'The Socialists, being infuriated at this, made a rush upon the police, some of them being armed with knives. The police used their clubs and wounded many of their assailants, and it is feared fatally, and finally succeeded in getting possession of the hall and in preventing the meeting.' That shows pretty well that the American people perfectly understand that you cannot trifle with lawlessness, especially in a country where there are large and practically unlimited democratic institutions. Everybody in America is expected to do what apparently nobody is expected to do in Ireland, and that is to obey the law. The New York Legislature and other American legislatures are very fond of passing resolutions sympathising with the disturbers of order in this country, but when similar elements begin to work in their own they alter their ideas. Then the police begin to use their clubs, and the military begin to get their rifles into that position which shocks Mr. Gladstone as being so terrible. What is going on in Ireland affects our own country also. Look at the state of things in London just now. Day after day the traffic of London is impeded. Day after day the order of London is disturbed by persons who have been taught by Mr. Gladstone that all interference by the police is an impertinence.<sup>1</sup> The disorders of London have become aggravated since that

<sup>1</sup> Referring to disorderly meetings in Trafalgar Square, which occasioned great annoyance and loss to the tradespeople of the district, and kept a large part of London in a state of uneasiness and turmoil. In the midst of these events, Mr. Gladstone made some adverse criticisms on the police, which were much resented throughout the country.



speech which Mr. Gladstone delivered to the deputation at Kidderminster, and the duties of the police have become inexpressibly more difficult and more dangerous than they were before; and the police have been denounced by Mr. Gladstone as acting illegally and as being impertinent. I happened to come across a quotation yesterday from a speech made by Mr. Gladstone's own Home Secretary in the year 1883 about the police; and to show you how Mr. Gladstone has been changed by his alliance with the revolutionary party of Mr. Parnell, I will just read what the Home Secretary of that day, only four years ago, said about the police. He said: ‘The first line of defence that we have is the police, and I hope I may pay my tribute to the splendid service which the police, not only in the metropolis, but also in the provinces, and in Ireland, have rendered to the cause of society.’ Not to the Government—not to the party, but to the cause of society, said the Home Secretary; but in spite of that—in spite of those splendid services which were rendered by the police—Mr. Gladstone has allowed himself, for party and political purposes of by no means a high order, to hold up the police, as it were, to the condemnation, and even worse than the condemnation, of the people of this country.

I wish to occupy your attention for a few moments on a matter which I think is of interest to the people of this country. I allude to the condition of British trade. I glanced at this subject the other night at Sunderland, but I did not go at all deeply into it for want of time. I see that my remarks with regard to the policy of protection have incurred the censure of a leading member of the Protectionist party (Mr. Henry Chaplin), and I am anxious to go more fully into the matter than I was able to go into it at Sunderland the other night. Nobody can take part in English public life at the present moment without being deeply impressed every day that he lives with the serious condition of British manufacture and agriculture, with the continuance of the depression which has for years affected those two great branches of industry, and with the very slender hopes and signs of any speedy amelioration. But the fact that British trade is depressed and that British agriculture is critically

affected, and the fact that there are no signs that reasonable people can rely upon of any immediate revival, ought to put us exceedingly on our guard against the adoption of rash remedies that are proposed for the cure of this depression. I dare say there are many Fair Traders in this hall, and I would like to argue a little with them this evening. In the first place, let me allude to what Mr. Chaplin said about my remarks at Sunderland. I said that low prices of the necessaries of life and political stability in a democratic Constitution were, I believed, closely connected or inseparable. Mr. Chaplin disagrees with that altogether, and says, How can you prove that you had not political stability twelve or fourteen years ago, when prices were much higher? and have you greater political stability now than you had then? and is there greater political stability in Ireland than you had at that time? Now I cannot go into the question of Ireland, because Ireland is affected by special causes which altogether render it valueless for trade examination. But with regard to twelve or fourteen years ago, when prices, as Mr. Chaplin says, were high, the fact is this, that twelve years ago prices were higher than they are now, but they were low relatively to the wages which were then earned; and that is my point with regard to low prices now—that the wages are lower than they were twelve years ago, that the profits of business are less, and yet that the prices of the necessaries of life are lower than they were twelve years ago. That is my point; but let us go back a little. Let us go back to times when, I hold, you had no political stability, and when you had high prices of the necessaries of life and low wages. Let us go back to the time at the close of the great war. For many years after the close of the great war you had high prices of the necessaries of life and low wages, a very miserable condition of the labouring and artisan portion of the community, and certainly no political stability. The masses of the people were kept down by the sheer force and strength possessed by the Government of the day; and we do not call that political stability. I go to another period, the period before the repeal of the Corn Laws, and there again you had high prices of the necessaries of life and low wages; and I cannot think you had

much political stability at that time. The fact which proves you had no political stability at the time is that Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Tory party, a man pledged to Protection by all the acts of his life and by the process by which he had got into power—Sir Robert Peel saw there was so little political stability in the financial position of the day that he threw over his party, and was even charged with having betrayed it. He abolished the Corn Laws and introduced corn into the country free of duty. I quote that to show that my argument about low prices of the necessaries of life and political stability in a democratic Constitution is strengthened if you look back to the two periods to which I have referred. Have we political stability now that we have these low prices which Mr. Chaplin says are such a terrible disadvantage? I say we have. What is my proof of it? I find this the greatest and most practical proof. The Tory party is in office and the Tory party is undoubtedly the party of political stability, and when the Tory party is supported by the great portion of the masses of the people I hold that you have political stability. What have you got now? You have in the great towns of England, in the great towns in the North, and in the towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and particularly in London—marvellously displayed in London—enormous volumes and enormous masses of the people, of the labouring people, who faithfully range themselves behind and support the Tory party. That is the state of things at the present day. What do you suppose would have been the state of things before the repeal of the Corn Laws if you had had in those days an election on the same franchise as you have now? I do not suppose in those days, under such circumstances, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, when prices of the necessaries of life were high and wages low, there would have been one-fourth part of the House of Commons supporting the Tory party. There is the difference between what I call political stability and political instability. I find you have now in this country, at a period of low prices, an immense portion of the population deeply attached to the Constitution, and I am certain you would not have had that portion so pronounced and so in favour of the Constitution at the time to which I have referred, when prices

were high and wages were low. Mr. Chaplin further said that the Royal Commission had reported that the present depression of trade was due to low prices. That is not accurate. It is distinctly inaccurate. What the Commission reported was that the depression of trade was due to over-production (a very different thing), and that over-production causes low prices; and it is not at all correct to say that the Commission singled out low prices and said they were the cause of the depression of trade. The Commission singled out the main cause as over-production, and that is another important fact to bear in mind. But, passing over that side of the argument, let us come to the great remedy that is preached to us for the depression of trade; and let us examine it quietly this evening.

What is Fair Trade? I have never been able to get a definition of it. I have several friends who are Fair Traders; my two great friends, Lord Dunraven and Mr. Jennings, the member for Stockport, are Fair Traders. I have never been able to get at what they mean by Fair Trade. What does it mean? Does it mean an *ad valorem* duty on foreign manufactures alone, or does it mean an *ad valorem* duty on foreign manufactures together with duties on raw material and food imported from abroad? Because there is an essential and vital difference between the two things. If it means only an *ad valorem* duty on foreign manufactures, then I am against it. I am against it from a party point of view. What would take place if the Tory party advocated an *ad valorem* duty on foreign manufactures? That would happen to us which happened to us from other causes in 1885. We should win the boroughs and we should lose the counties; because nothing will persuade me that the country population will acquiesce in a policy of allowing the manufacturing interest in the towns to put on protective duties which will make manufactured articles dearer to them to buy, unless they are to get a corresponding benefit for their own productions. I say that if Fair Trade means an *ad valorem* duty of foreign manufactures I am against it, because I think such a policy would greatly injure, possibly even ruin, the Tory party. But does it mean besides an *ad valorem* duty on foreign manufactures—and this is a question to which I must have an answer

from somebody of position in the country who advocates Fair Trade; they always shirk it—does it mean an *ad valorem* duty on foreign manufactures combined with duties on foreign imports of raw materials and foreign imports of food? Does it mean that? Let us take the imports of food. It is no use putting a duty on these imports for the purpose of benefiting the farmer unless your duty is of such a kind and such a nature as to raise the price which the farmer can get for his corn. That is quite clear, is it not? I should see no harm in a shilling duty on wheat. We had a shilling duty on wheat till within the last ten years, and it produced a very respectable sum of money, and I believe a shilling duty on wheat at the present moment would produce over a million a year, and it certainly could not by any possibility affect the price of bread. But that duty would do no good to the farmers. What the farmers want is a duty which shall make the cultivation of wheat profitable to them. Then what sort of duty will it be, must it be, to raise wheat to that price? What is the price generally admitted to be profitable to the farmer for the cultivation of wheat? Forty-five shillings a quarter. (A Voice: ‘Forty shillings.’) Forty—on certain land possibly you might not be able to grow wheat profitably at forty shillings a quarter. (A Voice: ‘Forty-eight.’) There seems to be a difference of opinion. It is an average between forty shillings and fifty shillings. What the farmer wants is such a duty as will raise the price of wheat from twenty-eight shillings, where it stands now, to some figure between forty shillings and fifty shillings. Now, is that what the Fair Traders advocate? That is what I want to know; because if they do, I want to know what evidence there is of any great national demand for such a duty on wheat. That is a very important matter. The Tory party, Mr. Disraeli once said, would be nothing unless it was a national party. A national party must, I suppose, have a national policy. I can quite understand that there are certain lines of policy which it would be the duty of the Tory party to resist to the last, even if an overwhelming majority of the nation advocated those lines of policy—lines of policy such as would alter the Constitution of this country, or lines of policy which would shake the rights of

property. I can quite understand that the Tory party ought to resist such a policy even if the nation demanded it by an overwhelming majority, even if by so resisting they were excluded from office for years. But with this financial question I find no such necessity. The Tory party are under no disability with regard to a change of fiscal policy. They are not responsible for the repeal of the Corn Laws; they always protested against the repeal of the Corn Laws. Therefore, if there was a great, strong national demand for a recurrence to a system of protection which should involve a duty on food, which would have the effect of making food higher in price to the people, I see nothing whatever to prevent the Tory party yielding to such a national demand. At any rate, for my own part, if I saw such a national demand, I should not think it my duty to offer an obstinate or a prejudiced resistance. But where is the national demand? I have put before you what the nature of the duty must be, and I want to know where is the national demand? Where are the great mass meetings held in favour of a duty on corn? I have not heard of one. Where are the petitions to Parliament in favour of a duty on corn? I have not seen one. Where is the instance in which a man of Parliamentary position supported by large numbers of followers has got up and advocated a duty on corn? There has never been one in my time (A Voice: 'Lowther.') Mr. Lowther? I think I am right in saying this, that Mr. Lowther has never advocated in the House of Commons the imposition of a duty on corn high enough to make the cultivation of corn profitable to the British farmer. Never—I am certain of it; and I am certain that if he did there is hardly one man in the House of Commons who would get up and agree with him. But there I have made my point, that if Fair Trade means an *ad valorem* duty on manufactures, I am against it, because it would benefit one portion of the country at the expense of the other. If it means a general return to the imposition all round of high duties on foreign imports, I say, before I make one step in that direction, I must have distinct and clear and forcible evidence of a national demand for such a policy. What do my friends the Fair Traders say to that?

But I will go a little farther. Let us assume that we have

a great national demand—an unmistakable demand. I have one criticism to make. It would be the most tremendous confession by a nation, not only of failure but of commercial weakness, which I can conceive. Can we afford as a nation to make such a confession as that, unless we are absolutely certain in our own minds that the remedy will make us better off than we were before? Can a great nation afford to confess, not only that it has made a great mistake, but that that mistake has nearly ruined it? That is a matter worthy of your consideration. It is a question of credit. You may say it is sentimental; you may say that when you have made a mistake you had better confess it and repair it as soon as you can; but it is an objection which is worthy of consideration, and certainly such a confession as that of national weakness and national failure ought not to be made except on the clearest and most certain ground that the policy you are going to recur to will make you stronger than before. But I proceed to another question which I put to Fair Traders. Can the Fair Traders prove simply, and in a manner intelligible to the people at large, that France, Austria, and Germany—countries where there are high protective duties—are more flourishing and more prosperous than we are? Can they prove it? It is no use saying to me, as I noticed a Sheffield paper said the other day, 'Go to America or New South Wales.' I will not go to America, and I will not go to New South Wales. There is not the smallest analogy between those countries and England. America is a self-contained country, and almost everything she requires for her people she can produce in abundance. We cannot. We have more people than we can feed; and not only for food, but for our manufactures, we depend on raw material imported from abroad. Therefore, I decline to go to America or New South Wales; but I would go to European countries—France, Germany, Austria—and I want to know whether the Fair Traders can prove, or undertake to prove, that the people of those countries are more prosperous than ours. I believe not. I have read the reports of our consuls from Paris, and also from Berlin, and those reports go to show that protection, so far from being a benefit to the French and Germans, has been a burden. Of

course it is only the opinion of a consul, but it is the opinion of an official—an opinion which throws upon the Fair Traders of the country the duty of showing that the consul is wrong and that protection has been a benefit to France and Germany. The question I want to ask is, whether European protected countries are more prosperous than ours. I have another question, and this question ought to be answered before Fair Trade is carried much further. No doubt at the present moment British industry is cramped and hampered and handicapped by the fortifications of customs duties which foreign countries have erected round their territories. There is no doubt about that, and it is equally true that, in spite of that fortification, an enormous amount of British manufactures filter through these fortifications into the countries protected. Foreign countries do not mind that going on to a certain extent, because they realise the advantages which they reap from the possession of the free market in England. But suppose that we in England were to clap on high protective duties on foreign imports, would not the situation be then altered, and would not foreign countries then proceed with a policy of retaliation and put on higher protective duties than they have now, thereby keeping out that margin of British importation which now flows over their protective barrier? That is worth considering, because, if they did, and importation was finally and for ever checked into foreign protected countries, I do not see that we should be any better off for protection here at home. It is quite true we should have gained the control of the home market, but we should have lost a large amount of our foreign exportation. I want this question answered, What would be the effect of foreign retaliation upon the adoption by Great Britain of protective duties? And I want another question answered: I want to know, if you adopt protection, what will you do with India? That is an important matter. India is financially embarrassed. The Indian Government finds great difficulty in raising a revenue sufficient for its wants, on account mainly of the depreciation of silver, and the Indian Government is embarrassed because you do not allow the Indian Government to put protective duties on articles of Indian manufacture. India is your great free market. Every kind of British



goods flows into India without the smallest obstacle, and the possession of India is of incalculable value on that account to the British working-man. But what I want to know is this. Seeing that India is financially embarrassed owing to the fact that you have not allowed her to put on protective duties for the protection of her industries, suppose you resort to protective duties for the protection of English industries, can you in common decency or justice—can you without most dreadful injustice—prevent India from putting protective duties on her own manufactures in order to keep out your competing article? That is a most important point. India has an industry which thrives in spite of British imports into India—the cotton industry. But suppose that India claimed to put a heavy protective duty on importations of English cotton in order to protect her own cotton industry, and in reply to your having put a heavy import duty on Indian corn, I want to know how you are going to say ‘No’ to her. The nation cannot afford to act unjustly—not with injustice so great as that would be if you said ‘No.’ And suppose India herself put a heavy protective duty on the import of English cotton, I want to know what the population of Lancashire and Yorkshire are going to say? I think they would have something to say to their main market for their produce being taken away from them. I want to know how the Fair Traders would propose to treat India in the event of our recurring to protective duties in England. Again, I think you will get into a difficulty with Ireland. It would be very difficult indeed to refuse to Ireland protective duties for Irish industries in the event of your having put on protective duties for English industries. And if you are to have protective duties for Irish industries, and protective duties for British industries, where is our commercial unity? I think you will admit that these are questions which the Fair Traders ought to answer, and which they ought to deal with; and they ought not to attack and they ought not to get angry with people of perhaps their own party who differ from them, but do not differ from them in an unfriendly way, but who wish to be convinced—who are not like the deaf adder, which stops its ears and won’t be charmed. I am quite ready to be charmed, only at the present moment the

music of the Fair Traders is so discordant that I can't be charmed. I certainly am no fanatical adherent of the Cobden school. I came into political life long after the school ceased to have any practical existence. I am no fanatical adherent of theirs, and, moreover, having been for a short time at the Exchequer, and, therefore, naturally having an interest in financial and revenue matters, I cannot but feel that any Chancellor of the Exchequer would be glad enough to raise revenue by customs duties, if he was certain that such a mode of raising revenue was fairly economical, safe, and popular—that is to say, acquiesced in by all classes of the community. But what the Fair Traders have got to show us is not only that it would be safe, would be satisfactory in the present state of England, that it would bring back prosperity; they have got to show us more—they have got to show that the great bulk of the nation are with them; and they cannot expect that any man in his senses, who occupies any position whatever of responsibility in politics, would consent to abandon what is undoubtedly the safe ground of the present arrangement, and what is probably the advantageous and beneficial ground of the present arrangement, in spite of large drawbacks and disadvantages—they cannot expect any sober, sensible person to abandon that ground unless they prove in the most clear and most unmistakable manner that the ground he is going to take up is stronger than the ground which he leaves. We must recollect—and I think Fair Traders should recollect,—that interests of the most vital character are committed to the charge of the Tory party. The guardianship of the Monarchy, of the hereditary Chamber; the connection between Church and State; the rights of property, order and law, are all committed to the guardianship of the Tory party. And we cannot, and no man of responsibility would, risk the whole of those interests on what, after all, might only amount to the mere turn of a card or to the mere cast of a die.

## THE STRENGTH OF THE UNION PARTY.

STOCKPORT, DECEMBER 16, 1887.

[A portion only of this speech is reprinted here.]

THE general sense of the country seems to me to have turned markedly in a Unionist direction, and you can see by the attitude of the two parties that that is so. The Unionists at the present moment, so far from being disheartened, are jubilant. The Repealers at the present moment, so far from being jubilant, are despondent. I dare say you noticed in the papers this morning that Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to a gentleman where he talked of the Unionist cause as in every way a failing cause. Where on earth does Mr. Gladstone get his information as to the course of politics in this country? Was the Unionist cause a failing cause in Dulwich, a large and representative constituency in the metropolis? Was it a failing cause in North Huntingdonshire, a representative agricultural county?<sup>1</sup> Where does he find that the Unionist cause is everywhere a failing cause? Would he find it here if he were present on this platform, seeing the thousands of people before him representing this great manufacturing town? It is a most curious thing how liable to error Mr. Gladstone seems recently to have become. It has been said by the poet that

The evening of life gives a mystical lore,  
And coming events cast their shadows before.

But those lines obviously do not apply to the hermit of Hawarden Castle. It is a most curious thing. Mr. Gladstone is an old man—old in the service of his country. But this is most remarkable, that though he is old in experience, and old in years, the

<sup>1</sup> Two recent elections in these constituencies had resulted in Conservative victories—in Dulwich by a majority of 1,412; in North Huntingdonshire by 286.

older he becomes the wronger and wronger he becomes—bad grammar, perhaps, the use of that comparative, but I think it expresses best the present character of Mr. Gladstone's statements. It is, further, most curious that his predictions and his prophecies as to coming events, which used to take two or three years in being falsified, now only take two or three weeks in the process. Since the close of the session the position of the two parties, the Unionist party and the Repeal party, has been completely altered; and I will give you one proof of it. Look at the position and attitude of the Liberal Unionist party. We all know what we owed to the Liberal Unionist party at the last election. They gave us most loyal support, and by their aid we undoubtedly won many seats; but at the beginning of the year the position of the Liberal Unionist party was a doubtful position. Negotiations were going on of a formal and official character for their reconciliation with Mr. Gladstone and his immediate following, and no one could quite tell at the beginning of the year what would be the result of these negotiations. What is the position now? Why, the leader of the Liberal Unionist party the other day, speaking in London to a considerable gathering of his followers, told them that all hopes of reconciliation with the Repeal party must be finally abandoned, and that, at any rate so far as the next general election is concerned, which may be three or four years off, the alliance of the Liberal Unionist party with the Tory party would continue and would hold good for all purposes. That is a great fact. The developed attitude of the Liberal Unionist party I take to be the cardinal feature of the recess. You may have noticed in the papers that in France they talk a great deal about republican concentration; and though they talk a great deal about it they do not seem to attain it. We have been occupied since the beginning of the year in what we may term 'Unionist concentration,' and we have achieved in the work a remarkable and undeniable measure of success.

Why should the Unionists be jubilant and the Repealers despondent? I think I can show you. It has often been urged against Mr. Gladstone that he adopted the policy of repeal in order to gain the Irish vote and to maintain himself in office.

I would be the last person in the world to think it necessary to dispute that proposition. It is quite possible that motives of that kind may have weighed upon him; but in political discussion, if you can, it is as well to attribute to your adversary the best motives; and therefore let us, for the sake of argument, attribute to Mr. Gladstone the best motive in adopting the policy of Repeal. What was the main plank in the platform of the Repeal party? It was this—the impossibility, as they hold, of governing Ireland under a Parliamentary union. They were persuaded, convinced beyond the power of argument or reason, of that impossibility; in fact they all found salvation in the comfortable reflection that Ireland was ungovernable, and they said it and spread it here and there and everywhere, in public and private, in Parliament and on the platform, that the Unionists would fail, and must fail, in maintaining peace in Ireland, in maintaining the security of life and property, and in maintaining the due fulfilment of obligations and the due discharge of contracts in that country. They also said the Unionists would fail in carrying on the business of the nation in Parliament on account of the opposition of the Irish party. They declared that the National League in Ireland and in Parliament would be too strong for all the forces which the Unionist party could bring against them, and on that they based their cardinal proposition that it was impossible to govern Ireland under the Parliamentary Union. Have those assertions been borne out? The National League was a very formidable organisation—perhaps the most formidable which the British Government has ever had to deal with—but it was only formidable as long as you were afraid of it. So long as from one political cause or another the British Government was unable to tackle the National League, so long the League was formidable. I was always certain the day would come when we should have to try conclusions with the National League in Ireland. I knew the struggle would be sharp and bitter, and would involve great controversy. Therefore I was anxious that the struggle, if it must come, should come later perhaps than sooner, and I did not want in any way to precipitate it; but I never had the slightest doubt that the moment the British Government chose to measure itself against the

National League the British Government would put down the League and all its organisation and peculiar methods of working. And what is the position of the National League now? The Government has measured itself with the League, it has procured extra powers from Parliament in the shape of exceptional criminal procedure for dealing with the League, that most baneful organisation in Ireland. And what is the condition now of the National League? The condition of the National League in Ireland at the present moment reminds me very much of one of those white, pasty, inconsistent puddings that you see sometimes in a pastrycook's shop—I think they call it 'blanc-mange.' It is a pudding that is always toppling over on this side or on that, unable to stand up, and threatening to fall and to go to pieces and to dissolve with every draft of air or passing shock from the outside world. The National League is distinctly on the wobble. Some of its leaders are in prison in Ireland for having broken the law. A few of its leaders are in hiding, and they are angry with the police because the police will not take the trouble to look for them; and others of those leaders—the most prominent of them—have, with a great amount of worldly prudence, sought for comfort and security in this country by addressing Radical gatherings in different towns. Mr. Gladstone the other day declared that the state of Ireland was getting worse every day. Upon what evidence does Mr. Gladstone come to such a conclusion? Compare the state of Ireland now with the state of Ireland at this time last year. At the present moment in Ireland criminals—real criminals, not political offenders, but people who were actually concerned in the commission of real, genuine crime—are being brought before legally constituted tribunals, and are being convicted, punished, and sent to prison with or without hard labour. This time last year it was hardly possible to secure the conviction of a single criminal in Ireland on any charge directly or indirectly connected with the agrarian question. Is that deterioration, or is it an improvement in the state of Ireland? If in any society criminals are being convicted and punished for crimes which a year before they committed with impunity, how can you argue, as Mr. Gladstone does, that the state of that

society is getting worse and worse? But there is another fact which seems to have escaped Mr. Gladstone's attention altogether. I dare say you recollect that this time last year we heard a great deal about what was called the Plan of Campaign. The Plan of Campaign was an organisation by which the tenants bound themselves under no circumstances to pay their rents unless the payment of rent should appear to be convenient to the National Land League. You may recollect that the Plan of Campaign made an immense sensation. It was regarded by the Nationalist party as the most triumphant production of political science which had been vouchsafed to this century. We hear little about it now. I read the Irish news most carefully, and I have not read of a single fresh estate in Ireland upon which the Plan of Campaign has this winter been proclaimed. Is that a sign that the state of Ireland is getting worse and worse, as Mr. Gladstone stated? Mr. Parnell, the leader of the Irish party, and Mr. Dillon and others, towards the close of last session ventured to prophesy the most terrible winter for Ireland. They declared in accents which used to make your blood run cold and your hair stand on end, that there would be the most awful outburst of crime and bloodshed in Ireland. They declared that social ruin would be manifested in Ireland in its most appalling shape. Has that been the case? On the contrary, over the greater part of Ireland you have complete tranquillity. There has been nothing approaching to any justification of the prophecies which were uttered: not even in the most disturbed districts—Kerry, Galway, and Clare. Although there have been occasional outrages of a shocking character, still there has been no such general systematic outbreak of crime as we have had experience of in recent years. Therefore, can you argue on that state of facts, as Mr. Gladstone does, that Ireland is getting worse and worse? No; there is no doubt if you go to facts and figures, and are not carried away by emotion and fancy, the state of Ireland, so far from getting worse and worse, is under the influence of a great Parliamentary majority, and, under a Government determined to enforce the law, getting better and better. Therefore I come back to this point, that the great plank of the Repeal platform—namely, the

impossibility of governing Ireland under the Union, has snapped in twain and broken down. Lord Granville compared the Liberal Unionists the other day to cherubim, because he said they had nothing to sit upon. But I think the expression 'political cherubim' is much more applicable to Mr. Gladstone and his followers, because the plank on which they sat, and on which they declared they would sit for ever, has broken in two and let them down into a morass of discomfiture and doubt. If that is so, that the principal assertion of the Repeal party has been utterly falsified in practice, is there any wonder that the Repeal party should be down on their luck and change their attitude of exultation for one of disappointment? And is there any wonder they should sing very small when they do sing, and in a minor key, and are only able to sustain the song in notes of quavering tone? It is perfectly legitimate, perfectly right and proper, that we, Unionists, gathered together at this great meeting, should congratulate ourselves upon this state of things, and should allow ourselves a certain amount of exultation over the obvious defeat and disappointment of our opponents. But we must be careful not to carry that too far, and we must remember that moments of success are sometimes the moments which are the most dangerous to the successful. There is a terrible tendency when you are very successful to be off your guard. There is a temptation to take refuge in repose and to sink into inaction. We must strive, and we must take care that our leaders strive, against yielding to that temptation. We must recollect that the country expects great things of the Unionist party. The Unionist party have not only promised to the country a tranquillised Ireland under a Parliamentary union, but they have also promised to the country large and liberal legislation, and they have also promised to the country a reformed administration, whether for imperial or local affairs; and these are promises which we must try to carry out. And we must use our success not for the purpose of merely contemplating the proud position we occupy, but as a means of advancing to a still more commanding position in the country.

The next session, I hold, will be a critical session for this Parliament. On the successes or failures of the Unionist



party next session they will be narrowly judged, in all probability, at the next general election. And therefore it is that I put in a word of warning against indulging ourselves too much in exultation over our opponents; and I put in a plea that we ought to be always looking forward to the future and taking advantage of any success which we have at the present time, in order to grasp a future still more successful. It is for these reasons that I observe with satisfaction the attitude which the Government has taken on a question which, I hold, is second to no other question before the country—and that is the question of economy in our administration and of retrenchment of our bloated and swollen public expenditure. I am gratified at the attitude which the Government have taken up on this question. I do not in any way care to recall the recent parts taken by some in connection with this question. I do not wish to rake up the utterances of persons high in authority, who on the platform and in the press declared not only that retrenchment was impracticable and impossible, but that, in fact, we ought to spend more millions than we do already. I do not want to indulge in variations on that most irritating and exasperating expression in which friends will indulge in private life—‘As you see, I was right; I told you so; I told you how it would be.’ I do not want to say anything of that kind. I am quite content to take facts as they are, quite content with events as I find them; and I think no impartial person can fail to see that the present Government are anxious now to be an economical and thrifty Government. I do not know whether you are aware of it, but you would have to go back to the year 1869, when better financial practices prevailed than do now, or did a short time ago, to find a year in which no supplementary estimates were presented to Parliament for the Army and Navy. There is an immense evil attaching to supplementary estimates. They cannot be always avoided, but they ought to be kept within the narrowest and strictest limits. Parliament has a right at the beginning of the year to know what is required for the service of the year, and if Parliament is afterwards told by Government, ‘We did not ask enough, and you must vote more,’ it will be obvious to you that the whole beneficial control of

Parliament over the expenditure of the country is gone. Of late years the supplementary estimates for the Army and Navy have amounted to several hundred thousands of pounds, and now we are told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the first time since 1869, that no supplementary estimates will be presented for those two services. I attach importance to that statement, and I am happy to say that it does not stand by itself. I observe that the First Lord of the Admiralty the other day spoke—I forget exactly where—and said that not only would there be no supplementary estimates for the Navy, but there would be a substantial saving on the estimates already voted by Parliament for the Navy. It seems almost too good to be true, but still it is an official statement, and till it is disproved we may attach credence to it and build expectations upon it. But not only that: I have got hopes also of the other great spending department, the War Office. The condition of the War Office is such as would daunt the heart of the stoutest economist. But yet, although the circumstances are most difficult, still I hear on good authority of reforms being carried out in that department. I will not say, because I am not in a position to say, whether these reforms are wise and well-planned. But this fact remains, that there is a considerable activity in that department, a rummaging up of obsolete and inefficient administration; and of this I am certain, that if these reforms which are now being considered and carried out are really wise and good reforms, they must result in an economy and saving of public money. But that is not all. The Secretary of the Treasury the other day stated in addressing his constituents that the actual saving upon the Civil Service estimates of this year as compared with the year before had amounted to no less a sum than 270,000*l.* That would be a respectable saving on the Civil Service estimates, and I have little doubt, knowing what I do of the estimates and of the capacity of the Secretary to the Treasury, that he will be able to show Parliament similar savings for the coming year. Not only that, but we are also informed on the authority of the Secretary to the Admiralty that the estimates for the great department of the Navy will be presented to Parliament next year for the first time in the history

of the country in an intelligible form. What does that mean? It means this, that the Government will not ask Parliament for money for which it cannot show sufficient reason and necessity. And, lastly, there is very good reason for belief that the principle, which I think was so beneficially and successfully asserted in the last session of Parliament, of referring the estimates to a Select Committee of the House of Commons—that that principle will be applied next year more methodically and more extensively than it was applied in the past session. Therefore, on all these grounds, I express my hope, regardless of all that passed a few months ago, that the present Government is determined on economy. What does all this economy and this determination to pursue economy by the methods I have pointed out mean to the taxpayers in figures? I will tell you how I calculate it myself, although it must be recollected that I do not command official knowledge. Still figures and facts are made public by the departments, and it is open to anybody who has had any experience of these departments to make a calculation; and I calculate that the meaning of what I have been putting before you in figures comes to about this. If we take into account, in the first place, the admittedly abnormal character of the naval and military expenditure for the last two years; if we take into account, in the second place, the condition and the prospects of the revenue; if we take into account, in the third place, the very considerable saving already effected; and if we take into account, in the fourth place, the overhauling of public departments now going on, and the abuses in these departments which are being brought to light—if we take all these matters into account, I hold this, that the meaning of what I have put before you in figures comes to this, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget next April should have—I do not say positively that it will be so, but he ought to have, I hold—an estimated surplus for the year 1888-89 of between two and three millions of money, and amounting to nearer three millions than two. The Chancellor of the Exchequer can do a great deal with a surplus of between two and three millions of money, and I do not know anything that would bring greater credit on the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues than to be

able to present the country with a surplus of that amount—a surplus which should not have been adventitiously, by any unexpected chances, brought about, but a surplus which will have been effected mainly, if not entirely, by rigid economy in public administration. It is my hope and expectation that by the financial year of 1889–90, the public expenditure of this country will have been reduced to an amount, as near as possible, to a little above or a little below eighty-five millions of money, or, in other words, a reduction of no less than five millions from the amount at which Mr. Gladstone bequeathed the public expenditure to his successors. This prospect, which I put before you, I know to be a justifiable and reasonable prospect, which is based on facts and on figures. And I rejoice over it exceedingly, for two reasons. My first reason is that I hold there is nothing more utterly wicked on the part of any Government than wasteful and improvident expenditure of public money. There is nothing more utterly abominable on the part of a Government than the unnecessary imposition of high taxes. The safety and stability of the nation depend not only upon the course of conduct which may be pursued by this party or by that, not upon political chances which change from day to day: the safety and stability of the nation depend upon sound finance, and the alphabet of sound finance is economy in public expenditure. That is my first reason. My second reason is more of a party character. I am certain that nothing will tend to make the Unionist party and the Unionist Government more popular and more strong throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain than the existence of a conviction in the minds of the masses of the people that they are a truly economical and thrifty Government, and that they care above everything for the relief of the people from burdensome and oppressive taxation. I may sum up the general result of what I have endeavoured to put before you by saying that the rank and file of the Unionist party have done their part bravely in Parliament and in the country. They have worked and laboured and struggled as I think no party ever did before, and more can hardly be expected of them. Everything now depends upon her Majesty's Government, and we may entertain, I think, all confidence that our legitimate expectations with

respect to their action will be amply gratified. All that is necessary now for the complete success of the Unionist party I hold to be that the Government should persevere resolutely in the task of repressing and curbing and keeping in check all those elements of disorder and anarchy and sedition which have for so long distracted Ireland; that the Government should persist steadfastly and patiently in their pursuit of the policy of retrenchment and economy; that the Government should produce at the opening of the session some large, liberal, well-considered, and statesmanlike measures of legislation with regard to the great matters in which a reformed Parliament and an enfranchised people must necessarily be deeply interested; and that the Government should carefully avoid all foreign entanglements, and should by no means become involved in any of those quarrels and disputes, apparently of a serious nature, which are disturbing European tranquillity. If such is the policy of the Government, and I believe that it is the policy of the Government, depend upon it, if we meet again next year, or when you meet again next year, after another session has gone by, you will be able to laugh at and deride all the efforts and all the devices of your opponents to upset you or to weaken you, and you may be certain that before long that rump of the Liberal party which has followed Mr. Gladstone will bitterly rue the day and curse the hour when they were persuaded by that statesman to fly the flag of Repeal, and to ally themselves and identify themselves with that party in Ireland whose most cherished hope, whose most ardent longing, and whose highest ideal of human happiness is to be found in the ruin and in the destruction of the British Empire.

## HOME RULE.

OXFORD UNION, FEBRUARY 22, 1888.

[The meeting at which the following speech was delivered was regarded with very great interest, not only at Oxford but throughout the country. Lord Randolph attended it at the special request of the members of the Oxford Union, about 800 of whom were present on the occasion. The resolution moved was in these terms :—That to satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people, it is necessary that a statutory Parliament be forthwith established at Dublin. Mr. E. A. Nepean (University) opposed the resolution. The discussion was continued by Mr. Cozens Hardy (New), Mr. Saunders (Balliol), and Mr. Murray (St. John's), and then by Lord Randolph Churchill.]

I CAN assure you, sir, that I consider it to be a very great honour to have been permitted to assist as a spectator, and even more to have been called upon to take part as a debater, in the discussions of this celebrated and learned Society. I did not have the good fortune while I was at Oxford to take part in the debates, although it was my privilege to be a member of the Society ; but I am glad that time and fortune have been kind enough to permit me to fill up a deficiency in my experiences which was to be regretted. While I thank you for having allowed me to listen to your debate, I would also thank you for the extremely courteous welcome which you have given me.

Now, sir, I have listened to five speeches on a great question, and they appeared to me to be speeches of great and equal merit—speeches of great and equal promise. One thing particularly pleased me. I observed that those three gentlemen, who adopted the views which I do not hold with regard to this subject, appear to have found their most effective armoury, their most resourceful arsenal for their most formidable weapons

against their opponents in speeches which I have myself, at different places, delivered. I cannot but be flattered by the attention which they have paid to those speeches, nor did I discern, as is sometimes the case when former speeches are quoted against me, in the quotations made, any expressions of opinion which I should in any way at the present moment repudiate or be ashamed of. One extract from my speeches was made by the first speaker, which I must notice—he attributed to me that I had designated the Irish people as foul fiends. He, I regret to say, has not studied the speeches, or the particular speech from which he professed to quote, with the accuracy and ability with which he has studied the Irish question; because, if he had done so, he would have found that the persons so called were not the Irish people, but the class of persons best known as moonlighters and outrage-mongers, whom he himself very properly designated as ‘desperate ruffians.’ I have never said, and I never will say, one word or utter one sentence to the discredit, or blame, or censure of the Irish people as a nation. I have lived among them much, I have travelled far and wide in Ireland, perhaps more than many Irishmen; I have watched and known personally several of the Irish representatives in Parliament, and never have I consciously said one unfair word to bring discredit or disrepute upon Irish representatives, and never shall I do so. I have experienced always in Parliament from the Irish representatives the utmost courtesy and generosity and indulgence, although on many occasions it has been my fate to be in sharp opposition to them. I do not propose this evening to follow in detail the interesting speeches to which you have listened, for several reasons, or at any rate for two. In the first place, because I should not like to undertake to deal offhand with the arguments which some of those speeches presented; and, in the second place, it struck me that in the three speeches which were supposed to be delivered in support of this motion, the motion itself did not sufficiently attract the attention of the speakers. When I had the honour of receiving the invitation of your president to take part in a debate in the Oxford Union, he informed me that I should be required to address myself to the Irish question, and the debate

to-night is entirely taken up with the Irish question. Before coming to the actual terms of the motion, let us for a moment consider what is the Irish question. It is extremely important that in these matters we should closely analyse and examine the phrases we make use of. Now what is the Irish question? I apprehend that all sections of opinion in the House will agree with me in this proposition—that the Irish question is like the poor: we have it always with us, and probably we always shall have it with us. The Irish question, as I define it, is the difficulty which we experience in governing Ireland, or, in other words, in obtaining in Ireland from our system of government the results which we obtain in Scotland and England. We have not yet obtained from our system of government in Ireland that amount of affection and reverence for the law, that amount of material prosperity among the people, and that amount of general contentment and tranquillity which we have obtained from our system of government in Scotland and England. That, I apprehend, is a correct definition of the Irish question. With regard to the motion, bearing in mind that definition, it is well the House should recollect that the Irish question was quite as acute during the years that Ireland had a Parliament as it has been since the time that Ireland has not had a Parliament. During the term of the independent Irish Parliament, that is to say from 1782 till the Act of the Union, it would be a melancholy work to examine the number of Coercion Acts the Irish Parliament was forced to pass. The Irish question, according to my definition of it, was more acute even during the term of that Irish Parliament than it has been since; so acute was it that Mr. Pitt had to deprive Ireland of the independent Parliament England had granted to the Irish people. That is the measure of the acuteness of this question at the time Ireland had a Parliament of her own.

Here I must make a brief digression. We had some time ago, in a letter from the leader of the Repeal party, an expression to the effect that Mr. Pitt's policy towards Ireland was a policy of blackguardism.<sup>1</sup> On that I would say, that if you

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Mr. Leveson Gower, a Liberal Whip defeated in the elections of 1886, Mr. Gladstone wrote: 'I am amazed at the deadness of vulgar



compare Mr. Pitt's policy in carrying the Union with Mr. Gladstone's policy in going in for Repeal, you find this most remarkable difference—that Mr. Pitt, in carrying the Parliamentary Union, sought for no party advantage, nor was he obliged to seek for any party advantage. Mr. Pitt's position in Parliament at the time was as strong a Parliamentary position as a statesman possibly could have, and the bringing of the Irish members to the English Parliament certainly could not strengthen, possibly might weaken, that position. That was the position of Mr. Pitt, and I legitimately infer that he had but one single motive at heart, and that was the good of the two countries. But if I contrast the position of Mr. Pitt with that of the present leader of the Separatist party, I do not detect the same singleness of mind, because the latter knew as an undoubted fact that the support which he gave to the policy of Repeal was a support which, one way or another, would bring him, until his policy was carried, an addition of eighty-six votes to his Parliamentary strength. Therefore, when I am told to remember the blackguardism of the policy of Mr. Pitt, I cannot assent to that most remarkable substantive without closely examining the personal position of the present leader of the Liberal party.

Since the Union the Irish question has assumed many forms, and has presented itself in many shapes to Parliament. From shortly after the Union down to 1829, the Irish question assumed the form of a demand for Catholic emancipation, and Catholic emancipation was at length conceded. But I cannot refrain from saying with respect to a great many men of both parties who opposed Catholic emancipation—that the main foundation of their opposition was that it would inevitably lead to the disestablishment of the Irish Church and to the Repeal of the Union. Were the fears of these men altogether unfounded? Catholic emancipation has certainly led to the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and if it has not led quite to the Repeal of the Union, it has certainly brought us rather near it. The Irish question, after Catholic emancipation was

opinion to the blackguardism and baseness—no words are strong enough—which befoul the whole history of the Union.'

granted, assumed a very acute form with regard to the payment of tithes, and at that period crime and outrage rose to a great height, and had to be repressed by the strongest Coercion Act that has ever been passed, the great feature in which was that the Lord Lieutenant might put the disturbed districts under martial law. We must never forget that the man who was Prime Minister when that Coercion Bill was passed was the Liberal statesman Lord Grey, who, only a year before, had been instrumental in passing the great Reform Bill. The next form of the Irish question with which Parliament had to deal was the Repeal movement which was headed by Mr. O'Connell. The Repeal movement lasted some years and then disappeared, and the Irish question assumed the form of what I may call political conspiracy. We had the rebellion—if it may be distinguished by such a name—of Mr. Smith O'Brien. We had the conspiracy which was known by the name of the Phoenix conspiracy; and another very formidable conspiracy, within the personal recollection of many here to-night, known as the Fenian conspiracy. That was the Irish question under the guise of political conspiracy, and Parliament dealt with the Irish question under that guise. Parliament then attempted to deal with the Irish question by what was known as heroic legislation, and you had two great Acts—the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and an Act which attempted to meet the demands of those who led the agitation in connection with Irish land at that time. Then you had another form of the Irish question, which sprang up in the year 1873. You had the Home Rule movement of Mr. Butt, and the movement died away; and in 1879 you had the Irish question in the form of the extremely advanced and socialistic land agitation under the auspices of Mr. Davitt, and that has been accompanied and succeeded by the Irish question in the form in which the House is now considering it—the demand for Home Rule as presented by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell. Now I have particularly gone over all those different forms of the Irish question—always asking you to bear in mind my original definition of that question—because I think it is important, for a right understanding of the subject with which this motion deals, that you should recall the history of the

Irish question as it has been presented to us in comparatively modern times. This motion only deals with one form of the Irish question, and there is no security whatever that, even if you were enabled to limit it within the scope of this motion, it would not again present itself in another form, so Protean is it in its nature.

Let me ask your attention for a moment to the motion which has been moved so ably to-night. I think, in dealing with subjects of this kind—subjects, after all, on which the welfare of thousands and of millions depends—that we should carefully guard ourselves against loose phraseology; that we should beware of abstract resolutions; and that if we assent to an abstract resolution we should take care that it should be, if I may use the term, mathematically worded. Now, what is the wording of this resolution? May I be allowed to analyse it? We are called upon to assent to a proposition that to satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people it is necessary that a statutory Parliament be forthwith established in Dublin. I observed with pleasure that the gentleman who spoke second particularly fastened on an adjective which attracted my attention—the adjective ‘just.’ What does that adjective mean? Is it an adjective of adornment, or is it intended to limit the subject to which it applies? Because an immense deal turns upon that. Does the mover of the motion, or those who supported him, mean by the just aspirations of the Irish people any aspirations of the Irish people? For instance, suppose the aspirations of the Irish people were for total separation. Would those be just aspirations? Now, the mover, as far as I can make out, avoided examining that adjective; but are aspirations for an Irish Parliament on the part of the Irish people just? Are they just with regard to the other two countries which form the United Kingdom? Does England possess a Parliament of her own? In my Parliamentary experience of thirteen years I have seen many purely English questions settled by Scotch or Irish votes. Does Scotland possess a Parliament of her own? The answer is obviously ‘No.’ And in Parliament many Scotch questions are decided by English and Irish votes. But if Scotland and England do not possess Parliaments of

their own, why should you assume that it is just that Ireland should possess such a Parliament? But if the adjective 'just' be, as I called it, an adjective of limitation—if it mean that you ought to try and satisfy those aspirations of the Irish people which are just—then the debate will occupy ground of a much less debatable character. But that was not the ground which the mover took up. Having adverted to the adjective 'just,' I now come to another expression in this resolution, and I may perhaps in passing praise the resolution. I think it is an admirable resolution for debating purposes, because it contains within a very small compass more disputable propositions than any resolution which I have ever seen. I come to the expression in the resolution 'the Irish people,' and we are asked to satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people. Now, are the mover and those who supported this resolution prepared seriously to contend that the whole of the Irish people are animated by similar aspirations? Because if they are not, obviously the expression is a loose and inaccurate one, and instead of talking about the Irish people, surely they ought to have inserted the words 'the majority of the Irish people.' But much turns upon that omission. If the Irish people were perfectly unanimous, if they were of one race and one creed, the difficulties of the Irish question would be much less than they are. But can any reasonable or practical man forget for one moment that in Ireland there is a large minority, certainly numbering one million out of four, and possibly numbering two millions out of four, in all probability numbering nearer two millions than one, who are diametrically and passionately opposed to the 'just' aspirations which are set forth in this resolution? This is what really differentiates the claim of the Irish people, or the majority of the Irish people, for self-government from the claim of every other people in history who have obtained self-government or independence. Let us take some of the instances which we know of nationalities having obtained self-government. Take the case of the Italians. Was there in Italy, when Italy fought for her freedom and independence, a strong minority of Italians passionately devoted to Austrian domination? Take the case of the Greeks. The Greeks obtained their independence. Was there

among the Greeks a strong minority passionately devoted to the rule of Turkish pashas? Take the case of the Bulgarians. Was there a strong minority of the Bulgarians passionately devoted to the rule of the Turkish pashas? In Italy, in Greece, in Bulgaria you had unanimity of national sentiment absolutely unbroken, and that was the great feature of the movement for self-government which took place in those countries. Can anybody seriously contend that you have anything approaching that unanimity of national sentiment in Ireland at the present time? Now, come to the main example alluded to by one of the speakers—Austria-Hungary. We are often told that the Repeal of the Union would be a successful policy in Ireland on account of the great success a dual Parliament has had in the Empire of Austria-Hungary. There again there was, with regard to the claim of Hungary for a separate Parliament, absolute unanimity of national sentiment, although in Hungary a large portion of the population are of a totally different race and origin to the Magyar portion. Yet the whole people, the entire inhabitants of Hungary, were as one in demanding that Hungary should be governed by a Parliament of her own. A Parliament was conceded to Hungary, and undoubtedly a dual Parliament in Austria-Hungary has worked fairly well, so far as ordinary observers can see, up to the present moment. Why has it worked well? It is agreed by all who are acquainted with the condition of those two countries that the mainspring, perhaps the only cause of its working well, is the loyalty and affection which the people of the two countries feel for the person of the Emperor. It is because the Emperor has deservedly gained the love and affection of Hungary and Austria, because of his personal influence over those two countries, that the complicated arrangement has worked well. But the House should recollect, before drawing a too rapid inference from the case of Austria-Hungary, that the arrangement has yet to be tried by great national difficulties and crises. There is this also to be said when you who support this motion point triumphantly to the case of Austria-Hungary: you ought to be prepared to contend, if you want to make your example a crushing one, that Austria-Hungary would not have been a far stronger empire than she

is, if it had been possible for her to have had one Parliament instead of two.

It is perfectly obvious that it is impossible to agree to such an expression as that which I have noted—namely, the Irish people. We are told that it is necessary for a certain purpose, to satisfy these aspirations, that a statutory Parliament should be forthwith established in Dublin. What is a statutory Parliament? I never heard the expression until the end of the year 1885, and then, I think, the expression was invented by a newspaper. There appear to be some people in this country who are innocent enough to suppose that the word ‘statutory’ is something so sacred that a statutory Parliament is a perfectly safe thing, and that a Parliament which was not statutory would be a very dangerous thing. I suppose, however, that the statutory Parliament is a Parliament which is created by statute, and whose powers are defined by statute; but I want to know from the supporters of this motion what sort of security they derive from the word ‘statutory.’ What sort of security can they show that the statute creating that Parliament would be like the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not? I should like to know how many statutes have been passed by Parliament which have not been either repealed or amended? And what is there to prevent the statute which you pass this year creating an Irish Parliament being amended the next year by a new one which might expand the power of the Irish Parliament? I therefore look upon the word statutory as being utterly delusive, and I would recommend that the word Parliament should stand by itself without the adjective statutory. But I ask whether you think that, having been unable to resist the demand for the creation of an Irish Parliament, you would be able to resist a demand by that Parliament for an extension of its own power. Upon this point I should like to refer to a passage from a speech from one of the most learned of living Irishmen—the right honourable gentleman who was Attorney-General in Lord Beaconsfield’s Government, and who was afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and who is admitted to be more intimately acquainted with Irish history than any other man. I mean Dr. Ball. In speaking in the debate on Home Rule in

1874 he used these words: 'The answer to the motion was not to be found in elaborate argument or in dealing with allegations and assertions which were alike unfounded. It was to be found in the perception which must flash across the mind of every man acquainted with the history of the two countries, that to grant it would be to weaken, if not to destroy, the power and greatness of the empire. They talk of confining themselves in the Parliament in Dublin to special questions. That was the theory, but they could not limit the range or the aims of the power they had called into existence. It would chip and burst the shell in which it had grown and been fostered, and soar far beyond command or control. What commenced with local affairs would expand to imperial. Having crushed the landlords of Ireland, they would next proclaim war with the Saxon and the Protestant. They could not measure the progress of representative institutions. The House of Commons, scarcely tolerated by the Tudors, had grown to be the prominent power in the State. The Irish Parliament, however sincere might be the efforts of those who demanded it to check it, would expand to dangerous dimensions. It would become ambitious, and aspire to dictate and intermeddle in the police of the empire.' That gentleman put extremely well a point which you must recollect, that if you once consent to the creation of a Parliament in Dublin, you abandon all power of controlling the action or of preventing the growth of that Parliament unless you had recourse to arms.

With regard to the statutory Parliament, it is said we are to grant it because it would satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people. Now, would it? That is a point upon which we can get no certain information. Not that it would make the slightest difference to me personally if I had the information; but it might to other people. It is supposed that a Parliament situated in Dublin on the plan of Mr. Gladstone would satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people. You remember that under that plan Irish members were excluded from imperial concerns, and they were never more to have the slightest voice in imperial matters. We are asked as serious and reasonable persons to believe that a Parliament of that character would satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people. I have here an extract from

the writings of a very distinguished, or at any rate a very notorious Irishman in the last century, when he was alluding to and describing his own Parliament in Ireland as it existed at that time, and the Parliament of Ireland as it existed then had undoubtedly far more power, far more dignity, than the Parliament which was proposed to be created by Mr. Gladstone. How did Mr. Wolfe Tone speak of the Parliament of Ireland as it existed before the Union—a larger and more powerful body than it is now proposed to create? This is what he said in 1793, and I recommend it to the honourable gentleman who is disposed to be so confident in the statement of Mr. Parnell as to the limits of the Irish appetite. This is what Mr. Wolfe Tone said: ‘The present state of Ireland is such as is not to be paralleled in history or fame. Inferior to no other country in Europe in the gifts of nature, blessed with a temperate sky and a fruitful soil, intersected by great rivers, indented round her whole coast with the noblest harbours, abounding with all the necessary materials for unlimited commerce, teeming with inexhaustible mines of the most useful metal, filled by four millions of an ingenious and gallant people with bold hands and ardent spirits, posted right in the track between Europe and America, within fifty miles of England and three hundred miles of France—yet with all these great advantages unheard of and unknown; without pride, or power, or name; without ambassador, army, or navy; not of half the consequence in the empire of which she has the honour to make a part as the single county of York or the loyal and well-regulated town of Birmingham.’ That was the satisfaction which a most representative Irishman in the year 1791 felt with reference to the Irish Parliament of that day; and, judging by that standard, what do you think as reasonable people would be the satisfaction which Irishmen of the present day would feel with such a Parliament as was offered to them by Mr. Gladstone? I leave this analysis of the resolution for the time. The fact of the matter is, this question of repealing the Union or maintaining the Union is really not a question of fine-drawn arguments. It is not a question of ingenious theory. It is a question of instinct and common sense, and no other. That is the way in which it was always treated by Sir Robert



Peel. He always said it was a question of common sense, and not one of elaborate argument. What is the meaning of this proposition to create a statutory Parliament? It means this. That you will abolish your present Imperial Parliament for the United Kingdom, and that you will set up and work in its place two Parliaments and two Governments responsible to those two Parliaments, and the proposition, which is seriously made, and which we are called upon to accept, is that that duality of Parliaments and Governments will produce a more perfect union for all imperial purposes than the one Parliament and Government that we have now. That is a statement which requires only to be made to be confounded. It is not necessary to argue to see its utter impossibility and nonsense. It may have occurred to many of you in the course of your daily experiences to witness that most painful and most melancholy spectacle of an idiot child. You see at once, in looking at it, that there is an awful absence of reason in the child, and just as a whole congress of doctors would not be required to prove to you that the child was an idiot, so, in the same way, no congress of doctors would be able to prove that the child was rational and sane: and so it is with this proposition, that duality of Parliaments and Governments will produce in the United Kingdom a greater union for imperial purposes than one Parliament and one Government produce. I submit to you that hopeless folly is indelibly stamped upon the lineaments of such a proposition.

After all, this question of Home Rule, although it is before us in certain novel aspects, is in no sense of the word a new question. It was my fortune in 1874 to witness the birth of Home Rule in its present form. I heard Mr. Butt bring it on in the House of Commons, and I heard it debated two nights. Mr. Butt was a remarkable man. He was a very learned lawyer. He was admitted to be perhaps as high an authority on constitutional law as existed in his day, and he was in addition a very sound Tory. Mr. Butt was supported by a great mixture of classes in Ireland. He was supported not only by the mass of the people, but a large number of most respectable persons followed him. More than that: certain Conservatives

were avowed supporters of Mr. Butt. Colonel King-Harman,<sup>1</sup> the present Under-Secretary for Ireland, came into Parliament as a supporter of Mr. Butt. Mr. George Morris, one of the shrewdest men in Ireland, and now Vice-President of the Local Government Board, was a supporter of Mr. Butt; and that was a movement which was discussed by Parliament, and which was decisively rejected by Parliament; a movement, compared to the present movement, as respectable and as high as can well be imagined. In fact, I do not like to draw comparisons, because I should be using too strong language about the present movement. That motion was opposed by both parties in the State at that time. I do not think it necessary to indulge in any denunciation of Mr. Gladstone for his conversion to Home Rule, but I do complain that he should indulge in denunciation of his opponents because they have not been able to make the same conversion which he has made. I read in the 'Quarterly Review' the other day a sentence from one of the works of Dr. Arnold; he said, 'It is not to be endured that scepticism should run at once into dogmatism, and that we should be required to doubt with as little discrimination as formerly we were called upon to believe.' Mr. Gladstone and his party more than all others did call upon the people, did call upon us, to believe in the merits of the Union. He had faith in the merits of the Union, but his faith changed to scepticism, his scepticism degenerated into infidelity in the merits of the Union, his infidelity has become dogmatic, and he fiercely denounces those who have been unable to follow him in his surprising course. When I referred to the motion of Mr. Butt it was to bring before your notice a speech made upon the motion by Lord Hartington—for after all it is rather in these old speeches that we find instruction than in anything said at the present day—to call your attention to a most remarkable statement which Lord Hartington made with regard to this very motion for a Parliament in Ireland, and to a most remarkable prophecy which he made. Lord Hartington, in replying to Mr. Butt, said:—'In honour and honesty the Imperial Parliament in Great Britain are bound to tell the Irish people that whatever arguments are used

<sup>1</sup> Died in 1888.

with reference to that question as applied to Ireland, while giving every consideration to the just claims of Ireland, we only look at it from an imperial point of view, and we are convinced that, whatever might be the effect of the proposal upon the internal affairs of the country, we can never give our assent to that proposal.' Here was the head of the Liberal party, speaking for the whole Liberal party, making a statement, without the dissent of a single member of that party, to this effect—that even if it were proved that Home Rule would be of greatest benefit and the source of unlimited prosperity to Ireland, the Imperial Parliament would never grant Home Rule because they would have to look at it from an imperial point of view. That was Lord Hartington's statement, which I commend to your notice as being then the view of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone was a party to that statement. And now I will give you the prophecy that immediately followed that statement, and when you see how the prophecy has been fulfilled, it will, I think, certainly induce you to lend even greater weight to the statement than otherwise you might be prepared to do. Lord Hartington, after alluding to the fact that the Liberal party was sometimes taunted with a desire to ally themselves with the Irish party, went on to use these words: 'But now it might be said that protestations of this kind were of little avail, and that when the exigency of the moment demanded it they might be easily evaded and set aside, and therefore it was of more importance that he should express his firm conviction that if any honourable members sitting on that side of the House were so reckless as to show symptoms on their part of a disposition to coquet with this question, there would instantly be such a disruption and such a disorganisation of parties that they would find that they had lost more support in England and Scotland than they could ever hope to obtain from Ireland.' I think you will admit that that was a most remarkable prophecy made twelve years before the event occurred; and it has been marvellously borne out; because, although Mr. Gladstone by his conversion gained eighty-six votes from Ireland, he lost not less than one hundred and forty votes in England and Scotland.

Now I will allude to a matter of interest, and one that has a considerable bearing on this question. I will examine the conversion of Mr. Gladstone to the policy of Repeal, and endeavour to discover the causes of that conversion. We know perfectly well that up to the time of the election of 1885 Mr. Gladstone was the declared opponent of the Repeal of the Union, or Home Rule; and that immediately after that election he underwent a great change of opinion, and then appeared for the first time as a supporter of Home Rule. Now, how was the great conversion brought about? Because it was that conversion and nothing else that has brought Home Rule within the region of practical politics. I believe that the history of Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule was this. I happened to be in a position at that time to be extremely well informed upon the subject, partly from official information at my command, and partly from other information I was able to obtain. From that information I have reason to believe that Mr. Gladstone was told after the election of 1885 that Lord Carnarvon, the then Viceroy of Ireland, had formed a strong opinion favourable to a large concession in the direction of Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone resorted immediately to the sometimes dangerous process of putting two and two together, and, remembering the change which Mr. Disraeli had induced the Tory Party to make in reference to Parliamentary reform, he arrived at the conclusion that if the Tory Viceroy was in favour of Home Rule the Tory Cabinet must also be in favour of it. He himself could not afford to be out of the running; he could not afford to be more Tory than the Tories themselves. Therefore it was that he made that remarkable communication to the editor of the Leeds newspaper which convulsed the whole political world at the time. But Mr. Gladstone did not know, and I do not know that he knows it now, that with the exception of Lord Carnarvon not one single member of that cabinet would consent to consider, even for one single moment, the policy of taking a single step in the direction of Home Rule. You may be certain that if Mr. Gladstone had known that, or could have brought himself to believe it, he would not have made the advance to the Irish party which he did, because he was under no necessity to make it. He occupied an

extremely powerful position at the time. He was at the head of a party numbering 330 members in the House of Commons—a party which could not be effectually assailed except by an alliance between the Tories and the Irish on the basis of a concession to the Irish on the lines of Home Rule, and of that, I have pointed out, there was no danger whatever. What is the moral of this? That is the point. It must detract from the merits and force of this conversion to Home Rule and of the policy founded upon that conversion, if you discover that it was based, not upon the calm, dispassionate, and disinterested examination of what was good for the two countries, but merely upon a miscalculation of Parliamentary chances by an old Parliamentary hand. Do not think I cast any doubt on Mr. Gladstone's present sincerity, but I am entitled to search for what I call the first cause of his conversion, and in that first cause I discover a fatal flaw in his position. I do not denounce Mr. Gladstone; for we must remember that the combination of the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove was from the earliest and, I may say, the holiest times not only counselled but enjoined; but I cannot conceal my opinion, nor can I refrain from the declaration, that I find in Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule a great deal more of the trail of the serpent than I do of the silvery wings of the dove.

Let me examine a very important and practical matter, one which seemed a good deal to interest those who spoke in support of this motion, and that is, what are the chances of Repeal being carried in Parliament and in the country? That is a very practical question, and very important for this Society, for two reasons: because it certainly would not look well in future years that you should have adopted hastily a policy which the common sense of England had afterwards continually repudiated; nor would it be well that many of those who are here to-night, and who are so fortunate as to have before them an uncommenced public career, should at the outset of that career ally themselves with a hopelessly defeated and fallen cause. Now, therefore, what are the chances of this Repeal policy which is embodied in this resolution being carried? I will examine it with judicial impartiality, and I start by telling

you that the conclusion at which I have arrived is that the chances of Repeal being carried are microscopically slender. What are the chances in favour of it? I find only one, and that is the alliance which has been formed between the Liberal party, or what remains of the Liberal party, and the Irish party. We are always told, that whenever the Liberal party have identified themselves with any question, that question has always sooner or later been carried to a triumphant issue. Well, that is far too general a statement, and the honourable members who spoke in support of this motion will at once recollect that at the close of the last century the Liberal party, under the leadership of Mr. Fox, adopted a line of policy which was considered by the country to be erroneous and dangerous. The result of the Liberal party adopting such a line of policy was, that from the year 1782 to the year 1832 the Tory party, with the exception of very brief and fortuitous intervals of Liberal government, absolutely governed England. I am quite content not to carry my examination of the future further than a period of fifty years. You must also bear in mind that the Liberal party of the present day is by no means the formidable instrument which the Liberal party was two or three years ago. Mr. Gladstone, in carrying his party through that most startling political manœuvre which I have referred to, has lost many of his ablest marshals and some of his most effective troops, and the difference between the formidable character of the Liberal party of the present day and that of three years ago is much the same as the difference which would exist between the man in possession of both his legs and arms and the man who in battle had lost a leg and an arm. Obviously the latter man would not be nearly so formidable an opponent. The alliance between the Liberals and the Irish Home Rulers is the only chance which I can find in favour of Repeal being carried, and against that I have to set a most formidable list of chances. In the first place, this Parliament is constitutionally and legally entitled to last until the year 1893, and as the Unionist majority in this Parliament has now proved itself, after frequent trials, to be of remarkable and unusual solidity, I cannot think that any rational person would suppose that this

Parliament, in the ordinary course of events, is likely to come to an end much before August 1893. That is a long period—five years—and a great deal may happen in five years. Mr. Gladstone states, and his followers proudly repeat, that the flowing tide is with them. Yes; but in five years the tide may flow and ebb, and ebb and flow; and there is no reason that I can see why when August 1893 comes round, the tide should not be flowing on the side of Mr. Gladstone's opponents. Therefore, considering that this Parliament is likely to last five years, I own that I cannot attach the importance to those recent bye-elections which Mr. Gladstone's supporters seemed inclined to attach. It must be always recollected about them that the great question of the Union does not come before the constituencies—all sorts of minor issues come before the constituencies—questions such as the case of Miss Cass, the case of Trafalgar Square, or something of that kind. But at not one of these elections has the question of the Repeal of the Union been before the constituency except in an indirect form, and that indirect form has been the public renunciation and denunciation by the supporters of Mr. Gladstone of the legislative proposals which Mr. Gladstone placed before Parliament in 1886. For these reasons, I do not think that we ought to attach, or that the followers of Mr. Gladstone would be wise in attaching, undue importance to these bye-elections, considering that whatever they show we shall never actually ascertain until the month of August 1893.

I come to another chance against the policy of Repeal being carried, which, I think, is of great importance, and that is, that those who study Irish history and Irish nature will come to this conclusion, that all Irish political movements are essentially transient in their nature. Take the great Repeal movement, which was far more passionately supported by the Irish than the movement of Mr. Parnell, and was far more honestly supported, because it was entirely unconnected with the land. That movement was passionately supported by the Irish people of all classes and all creeds, for O'Connell had an immense number of supporters among the classes as distinguished from among the masses. How long did that Repeal movement

last? Only a very few years; and from the day when it disappeared to the present time, the movement for Repeal has never been heard of at all. Take the Fenian movement. I remember quite well the beginning of the Fenian movement, and I do not think I am using any exaggeration when I say that half of the Irish population were either sworn Fenians or in close sympathy with them. What has become of the Fenian movement at the present time? It can hardly be said to exist. It has absolutely vanished into the past, and so, no doubt, every other Irish political movement will prove to have been of a transient character. In connection with this view, let us examine the present constitution of the Irish party. Do you think that anybody who knows Ireland, and knows that party, would think it likely to hold together until the month of August 1893? I do not. I know there are divisions of the deepest character in that party, with difficulty at the present moment bridged over. The party is sharply divided into two sections—those who believe in the efficacy of Parliamentary and constitutional methods, and those who do not believe in the efficacy of those methods; and depend upon it, as year after year goes by, and Home Rule recedes farther and farther into the distance, those who do not believe in the efficacy of Parliamentary methods will assert their superiority over those who do believe in the efficacy of Parliamentary methods, and the moment they succeed in asserting that superiority the knell of the Irish party, as we know it now, will have been tolled. You may say that by stating this I am perhaps preventing such an eventuality taking place. Not at all. It must take place, in the nature of things. It cannot help taking place as sure as we are here. If this present Parliament lasts for five years, the Irish party, as we see it now, will have gone to pieces. That is another consideration, I think, well worth your notice against the policy of Repeal being carried.

I come to another, of equal importance,—the extreme uncertainty of any political movement being carried to a triumphant issue which absolutely depends upon the life of one man. I heard the other day Mr. Gladstone speak in the House of Commons. After the many speeches I have heard him



make, I never heard him make a more memorable, a more effective, a more oratorical effort, not only from the eloquence with which it abounded, but memorable from the physical vigour required from a man of his age to deliver so long, so exhaustive a speech. But as I listened to that speech I watched the party behind him and the colleagues by his side, and I thought to myself, 'Where would you be without the oratory of your leader?' and my mind, instantly, readily, and with certainty answered the question, 'Nowhere.'

I suggest another chance, which is equally good, against the policy of Repeal being carried. I will rejoice the imagination of those who support this motion, and assume the possibility of the date of August 1893 coming round, and the accession to office of Mr. Gladstone at the head of a majority. Even then the chances of carrying Mr. Gladstone's policy would not be very great, because then you are met by the absolute impossibility of framing a plan which shall successfully create and define this statutory Parliament. One question alone, the exclusion from or the retention of the Irish members at Westminster, you will find, if you think it over, would checkmate the framing or devising of any plan for a statutory Parliament in Ireland, and no one knows it better than Mr. Gladstone. He knows he cannot get the Liberal party to support a policy which will entail the exclusion of the Irish members. He has never said, and he never will say, that it is in his power to devise a plan which will retain them at Westminster while giving them a Parliament of their own. Nobody has ever attempted to devise a plan but Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Butt never did. He was often challenged, but never attempted it. The present Irish party have never attempted it. They have often been challenged, but they never would. Mr. Gladstone was the first to devise a plan; and such a plan it was, that even the mover and supporters of this motion had not one word of praise for that plan. But I go still further and say this, that even if Mr. Gladstone, by the help of a fanatical majority, was enabled to set up in Ireland a statutory Parliament of some kind or another, you may be absolutely certain that the crazy and cranky machinery of government would be shattered and

shivered into a thousand fragments at the very outset of its existence by the resistance, the armed resistance and the irresistible resistance, of Protestant Ulster.

And now I can understand some one saying to me in desperation. Is Home Rule, then, never to be granted? I can tell anybody who makes such an inquiry the epoch at which it will be granted, but I cannot fix the date of that epoch. When Britain has ceased to rule an empire; when Britain has ceased to be a nation; when Britain has lost her great dependency of India; when Britain has been abandoned and repudiated by her colonies; when Britain has been overrun by foreign armies and conquered by foreign foes; when her wealth, her manufactures, and her commerce have all departed; when the manly spirit and dogged determination of her sons have become but as a memory and as a dream of the past—then, I think, Ireland will obtain Home Rule. I can only wonder at those who, at such a moment as the present, are seeking, by various prettexts and under plausible excuses, to weaken, mutilate, and divide our Imperial Government and our Imperial Parliament. Open your newspapers any morning, and you will see at the head of the foreign intelligence the words ‘The European Situation.’ Although I earnestly hope and believe that the European peace will be preserved from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, and even from year to year, still I cannot disguise from myself, nor can any of you disguise from yourselves, that we may be standing on the brink of a rupture of European peace such as we have not seen since 1813. If such a catastrophe as the outbreak of war should fall on Europe, I know, and you know, that it will require all the concentrated strength and all the undivided resources of England to bear her unharmed through such a conflict and collision of nations. I own that I have little patience to argue on such a matter as this with those who at such a crisis of the world’s history seriously propose to adopt, as an expedient of domestic policy, a programme so desperate and so insane as that embodied in this resolution.

Let me assure you of my very sincere gratitude for the kindness with which you have listened to my lengthy remarks. I wish most respectfully to say to you that you are right and

wise to consider betimes this great constitutional question. You do rightly, and you do wisely, as the representatives—ay, probably as the leaders—of the coming generation, to exercise your strong, your bright, and your hitherto unwearied intelligences upon a subject so high and so attractive as the relations which exist, or which ought to exist, between the Irish and the English people. I earnestly pray that the result of your continued deliberations may be to induce at least the large majority of you to walk straightly and to tread firmly in that path of honour and safety which till within two years ago was consistently and unhesitatingly followed by both the great political parties in the State; and I entertain the confident anticipation that it will be alike the privilege and pride of many of you to contribute in a marked degree, according to your several measures, capacities, and opportunities, to the maintenance, in all its splendour and in all its unity, of the mighty empire which is your inheritance and our great possession.

## COST AND CONDITION OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 8, 1888.

[In Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates, Sir Walter Barttelot moved the following amendment :—‘That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, praying that, in order accurately to ascertain our position, she may be graciously pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the requirements for the protection of the empire.’

The result of this was that a Royal Commission was granted, though not precisely of the kind which Sir Walter Barttelot and his friends desired. The following speech was delivered in support of the amendment.

The virtual control of the Army by civilians, and the effects of that system, are dwelt upon in this speech, but the importance of the issue thus raised has not yet been adequately appreciated, nor are the dangers involved in it at all comprehended by the people.]

I THINK I am right in saying that since the great debates on army organisation, which will be well within the recollection of the right honourable gentleman opposite [Mr. Gladstone], which took place in 1869, 1870, and 1871, we have had no discussion in the House of Commons so important as the one which the House is now engaged in carrying on. I think the House will act wisely if it endeavours to arrive at what I may call the real meaning of the motion now before the House. It appears to me to be this. It is a cry of alarm raised by the representatives of the services at our present condition as regards offensive and defensive preparations; a great and loud cry of anxiety concerning the present condition of our military organisation. There is one feature about this Parliament which is worthy of notice. I doubt whether in any former Parliament the services have been so strongly represented as they are in

the present House. I do not wish the House to be led away into any discussion as to whether that is a wise arrangement or not. By consulting a work<sup>1</sup> which is in favour with honourable gentlemen opposite, and which I have no reason to suppose is incorrect, I find that the services are represented more or less directly in the House by no less than 178 members; therefore the Parliamentary strength of the services is most unusual, and probably has never been equalled, or even approached, in any previous Parliament, and may possibly never be equalled again. What happened on Monday night? Many speakers addressed the House, and of all the speakers who addressed the House, and who all, except one, belonged to the services, or may be said to have represented the services, every single member who spoke agreed in assailing the position the Government had taken up with regard to this motion. There can be no question among us as practical and reasonable beings, that on all subjects of technical administration and management the authority of the representatives of the services must stand high. What was most remarkable was the absolute unanimity which characterised the declarations of the honourable and gallant gentlemen who represent the services. Unanimity has not always characterised the representatives of the services. There have been great divisions with reference to the Army; one honourable member would advocate a particular reform and was contradicted by another; and if we refer to the great debates on army organisation which characterised the years I have before alluded to—I mean the debates on the introduction of short service and the abolition of purchase—we shall find a sharp division of military opinion on the merits and demerits of those reforms. The bulk of army opinion was against them, but there were many distinguished soldiers who sided with the Government of the day, and advocated the reforms. The unanimity which we now have among the representatives of the services with regard to this particular motion is almost unparalleled, and is, I think, worthy the attention of the House. They one and all, by different arguments and by different allegations, asserted our position from a military point of view to be in a deplorable and

<sup>1</sup> *The Financial Reform Almanac.*

unsatisfactory condition, and that notwithstanding the increasing cost which the House has been called upon to defray in respect of the Army of this country. It would certainly appear from some of the speeches made that the only remedy proposed was that we should spend more money. I am not prepared to say that is their remedy; but if it is, I am at issue with them. My remedy, if their statements of fact are true, is, 'Reform your system.' If we reform our system, I am convinced that the money which is spent now will be amply sufficient, and more than amply sufficient, to maintain our army in a fairly efficient and satisfactory condition. Let the House consider the nature of our system of military organisation. There is one feature about it which is absolutely unparalleled in any other country in the world. No other country has a military system at all approaching ours, and that drives us to one of two conclusions. Either our system is so good that no other country can at all approach it, or it is so bad that no other country would adopt any part of it. The House can form an opinion for itself as to which is likely to be the case. The system is a most curious mixture of civil and military elements, the feature of which is that the civil element predominates over the military, which is subordinate to the civil. The consequence is, that the responsibility to Parliament is laid upon the civil element alone and altogether taken away from the military element. There is no connection whatever between the military heads of the Army and the Parliament of this country. That, I believe, is a correct statement of our military system; and not only is there no approach to it in other countries, but our military system, compared with that of other countries, is very costly.

Now, sir, we are told by the representatives of the services in this House, speaking with responsibility and authority, that this system, which costs more than any other system, is useless, and worse than useless; it is a mischievous system, which gives no results in the shape of the military preparations which the country has a right to expect. That this is the result is not a matter of surprise. We have made arrangements by which military men, who from their youth have studied and mastered all the intricacies of military service, are placed in direct sub-

ordination to civilians who have had no such training, and who, from the necessity of the case, are incapable of acquiring it. We apply to the Army a system which, I venture to say, we would not uphold and maintain in any other case. I will draw a homely analogy. Supposing the Prime Minister of this country were to select the senior member for Northampton<sup>1</sup> to be head of the Church of England and were to appoint him Archbishop of Canterbury, or supposing he were to select the right honourable member for Sleaford<sup>2</sup> to be head of the legal profession and make him Lord Chancellor, the result would be that the public mind would be shocked by such appointments. A man who made such appointments ought to be placed under legal restraint. But that which is supposed to be an insane action in ecclesiastical or in legal matters is regarded as a perfectly sane act in the management of military affairs. Not only are military training, military life, and military experience not required in the case of high War Office appointments, but I believe I do not go too far when I say that military training, military life, and military experience are almost a disqualification for high official appointments at the War Office. In what I am about to say I do not propose to throw any blame upon the present Secretary for War.<sup>3</sup> When the present Secretary for War was appointed he endeavoured to put an end to many curious anomalies which prevailed in his department. The Secretary of State in his statement on the Army Estimates has mentioned certain reforms which he has adopted for the purpose of relieving the civil authority of some of the control over the Army. The Secretary of State regarded that as a primary feature of reorganisation. What strikes me, however, is, that by this so-called reform certain offices have been abolished and others have been set up in their places, and the heads of the abolished departments have been placed in other positions. That is the character, as a rule, of War Office reorganisations. The Secretary for War has abolished the offices of Director and Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport, which were formerly respectively filled by Sir A. Haliburton and Mr. Lawson at salaries of 1,200*l.* and of 1,000*l.* per annum. But although

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Labouchere.    <sup>2</sup> Mr. Henry Chaplin.    <sup>3</sup> Mr. Edward Stanhope.

these gentlemen ceased to exist in their former characters, they now reappear—resurrected as it were—Sir A. Haliburton as Assistant Under Secretary for War, with a salary of 1,200*l.* per annum, and Mr. Lawson as Assistant Deputy Accountant-General, at a salary of 1,000*l.* per annum? Will the House believe that there was already in existence an Assistant Under Secretary for War at a salary of 1,500*l.* per annum in the person of Colonel Deedes, who has no duty to perform except to look after the messengers at the War Office, and who has now the aid of Sir A. Haliburton to assist him in the discharge of that laborious work, and that there were already in existence two Assistant Deputy Accountant-Generals, one with 1,200*l.* and the other 1,000*l.* a year, and that Mr. Lawson has been appointed to assist them, with a salary of 1,000*l.* per annum. That is not all. In the place of the Surveyor-General of the Ordnance Department two new offices have been created. There has been created a Director of Ordnance Factories, and the gentleman who holds that office is General Maitland, who was formerly one of the Superintendents of the Gun Factories, at a salary of 950*l.* His salary is now doubled, and he receives 1,800*l.* a year; and what is more remarkable is that he was singled out by the Commission presided over by Sir J. Stephen as being mainly, if not entirely, responsible for the design and manufacture of the ill-fated 43-ton guns. The Secretary for War, in his statement, uses the following language: ‘Among the advantages which I anticipate from this alteration I place first the fact that the military authorities will now be enabled to take a comprehensive view of the whole condition of the military resources of the country, of our requirements, and of the means available for meeting them. All the threads are in their own hands. Any scheme put forward by them should be founded upon full knowledge of all surrounding conditions, and the Secretary of State will be enabled to rely upon them for advice as to the comparative importance of all proposals for army expenditure.’ What I wish to ask is, whether the Commander-in-Chief and his great military advisers are aware of the increased responsibility which has been thrown upon them, and whether they are willing to accept that increased responsibility. If the statement



is a mere expression of the opinion of the Secretary for War, it is not worth the paper it is written upon. The Secretary for War says that all the management of the Army is in the hands of the military authorities. That is contrary to the fact. The most important matters connected with army administration, such as those relating to contracts for clothing and for ordnance, are absolutely removed from the knowledge of the Commander-in-Chief; and that being so, I fail to see how all the army administration is in the hands of the military authorities.

I come to a much more important question—that relating to the estimates. Under the Order in Council which created the present office of Commander-in-Chief, the duties of that officer were greatly enlarged, and the Commander-in-Chief is now charged with the duty of preparing the estimates. If the House turns to the duty of the Financial Secretary to the War Office, they will find that he is charged with the duty of compiling the estimates. Will the Secretary of State explain the distinction between preparing and compiling the estimates? Does compiling really mean adding up the Commander-in-Chief's figures to see whether he has made any mistake in his arithmetic, or does it mean going over the estimates, reducing some amounts fixed by the Commander-in-Chief, and increasing others? If you have not given financial authority to the military officials you have not increased their responsibility nor their control over the Army. The control over the Army depends upon financial authority, and if the Commander-in-Chief has nothing to do with the preparation of the estimates matters are left exactly where they were before. That argument cannot be contradicted; but in spite of this the Secretary of State says that now, for the first time, he is able to rely on the military authorities. That is a most extraordinary statement. I altogether deny its accuracy, and I assert if former Secretaries of State have not been able to rely on their military advisers nothing which has taken place in the War Office will enable the Secretary of State to rely upon them now. I would like, with regard to our present position, and with regard to this question of military responsibility and military control, of civil responsibility and civil control, to read to the House some extracts from the evidence given before the Royal

Commission by a witness of the highest authority. Lord Wolseley, in his evidence last year before the Royal Commission on civil establishments, used these most remarkable expressions, which are well worthy of the serious consideration of the House of Commons. In reply to question 2,473, Lord Wolseley said: 'The tendency of all our military administration, so far as I have been able to judge of it, has been to make military men extravagant, has been to make them spending animals instead of economical animals. You have divided the great administration of the Army into the military and into the civil, and you have strictly reserved to the civil branches everything connected with finance and everything bearing upon economy. The result is, as might be expected from such a system, that the military commander and his staff consider that they have absolutely no responsibility about money, and in all the demands and requests they make for stores or for money they do not think of economy, having been taught that the economical side of the question is entirely to be dealt with by the financial people in the War Office. Whereas, according to my notions, if you threw upon officers commanding districts and all the stations throughout the world a certain amount of financial responsibility, you would make them very anxious to economise for the public service; their reputation would then be at stake and they would hesitate before they made any extravagant demands.' In reply to question 2,528, Lord Wolseley said: 'My experience is, that when soldiers are trusted, as I have seen them, as governors and in that sort of position abroad, they are more particular about public money and more economical than any one else.' In reply to question 2,529, Lord Wolseley said: 'Now if the officer is economical he gets no credit for it. He is looked upon as a fool.' That is one of the results of our curious military system. Now, sir, these are Lord Wolseley's statements before a Royal Commission. But he gave further evidence as to the effect of placing a civilian in a responsible position over military men. In reply to question 2,250, Lord Wolseley said: 'I think it a very ridiculous thing to bring a gentleman into the War Office and make him responsible for supplying the Army with the most important implements they have to make use of—their

arms, great guns, &c.—who may be absolutely ignorant of everything connected with war, or the requirements of war, or the stores made use of in war.’ In reply to question 2,460, he said: ‘I think that the amount of effective work, as far as the Army is concerned, that a Parliamentary gentleman coming into the War Office can do is very small. I do not think the public have any very great return for the salary he receives. He brings no special knowledge to bear upon any of the very difficult subjects he is asked to deal with. He is the fifth wheel of the coach. The only thing I know he really can do is to answer questions in the House. If he interferes with people he has to deal with he interferes with the efficiency of the Army, and if he does not interfere with them, what good is he and for what purpose is he there?’ It is only fair to say that the statement was made about the Surveyor-General. Lord Wolseley, who had been through many campaigns, and who is a G.C.B., being subordinate to the Secretary of State and dependent on the Secretary of State for his existence, could not apply that language to his official superior; but I am putting no extravagant construction on Lord Wolseley’s words if I were to say to the Secretary of State, ‘*Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.*’ Lord Wolseley contrasts our system with the German system, and that is a very important matter. Lord Wolseley, in answer to question 2,338, said: ‘Germany is divided into nineteen army corps, and each army corps is as independent almost as England is of Ireland. It has its own establishment, its own headquarters, and its own storage accommodation. It has its own transport and everything complete, and there is allotted to it, to the general officer commanding, so much money on an estimate, and he manipulates the whole thing, and is responsible to whoever is the financial man at the financial headquarters.’ For the moment I digress in order to relate an experience of my own. When I passed through Berlin the other day I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of a captain of one of the regiments of Dragoons of the Guard. He was good enough to offer to show me all of what I may call the domestic economy of his regiment. I may mention that this officer was a man of high rank, the heir to a great fortune. That officer went

to his regiment every morning at six o'clock, remaining with it until noon. He returned to his regiment at one o'clock and never left it until five or six o'clock in the evening. That is the way in which the Prussian Army works. The reason of the greater efficiency of that Army is because of the responsibility which the German system puts on the officer, as I shall show the House. The German officer has not only military control, but also financial control, and the manner in which an officer manages his regiment and the finances of his regiment is the measure of his promotion. This officer showed me the whole of the squadron of about one hundred and fifty men in all its working. That squadron was complete in every single particular. The whole of the money for the maintenance of the regiment was allotted to the colonel of the regiment who, with the five captains of the five squadrons, dealt with that money entirely as they thought fit. They made their own contracts, bought their own supplies, purchased all their articles except horses and weapons. He showed me the storehouse of the squadron. There were in it duplicates, triplicates, of every single article of equipment or accoutrement which a cavalry regiment could possibly want. There were three or four suits of clothes, three or four sets of pouches and helmets; in fact they had every sort of thing in their storehouse in duplicate and in triplicate. Will the House believe that the great rivalry between regiments in Germany is, not to spend but to economise money, so that their stores may be better and greater in amount than those of any other regiment. That is the result of putting financial power in the hands of a soldier; and it is a fact that every Prussian regiment going to war is turned out with every article of equipment brand-new from beginning to end. That regiment of which I am speaking could have gone to the frontier at twelve hours' notice, and not one single letter of any sort or kind need have passed between them and the War Office. I venture to state that not one single regiment could be moved in this country without reams and files and folios of correspondence, extending over a period of several days; and that is our system and our military condition.

I have given to the House an instance of a Prussian regi-

ment, and from one instance you may learn all. They are all alike. I give the House now an instance of an English regiment which also came under my personal notice last year. An officer commanding one of our crack cavalry regiments required for his regiment new ammunition pouches. He applied for them, and after a time he got them. When he got them, however, he found that the straps across the shoulders were so weak that when the pouches were full of ammunition the straps broke and the ammunition tumbled out. The defect was brought to the notice of the War Office, but at first they did not believe it. There was a long correspondence, but at last the War Office replied and admitted that they were bad, and new pouches were sent. When they arrived, it was found that they would not hold the regulation quantity of cartridges. Again the colonel commanding brought the matter to the notice of the War Office, who were most indignant and perfectly incredulous. A prolonged correspondence ensued with the War Office, but at last a solemn inspection was made of those pouches, and the statement was found to be correct. The colonel told me only the other day that, after a correspondence extending over more than a year, he had at last succeeded in getting for a crack cavalry regiment proper ammunition pouches. From that you may get a most perfect picture of the beauties of the German and English systems. These are instances which may not be contradicted. But the absurdities of the War Office are worthy of more notice. Lord Wolseley in his evidence stated to the Royal Commission that a man in Canada who had claims on the War Office for 2s. 6d. had to sign his name nineteen different times. In the report by the accountants appointed to audit the accounts of the Woolwich factory there is a passage as to the query-sheet. On the question of payments made, it had to be signed or initialled by no fewer than eight persons, and after one year's labour of those eight persons in reference to this particular question, the result was a total disallowance of 2s. 4d. Then in another passage the accountants speak of the many signatures required, and say that 'much labour is bestowed on most trifling amounts.' But what does Lord Wolseley say with regard to his own work? Here is what the Adjutant-General of the Army says: 'Taking

my own work, there is such an immense amount of small work that, instead of having time for serious and big subjects, one's time is taken up in reading stupid little papers upon stupid little subjects. 'There is an immense amount of routine which ought to be avoided.' That is how Lord Wolseley describes the working of the system.

I should like to tell the House what are the results of the system. Lord Wolseley says: 'I think we move our troops a great deal too much, and that an immense amount of money is spent uselessly upon the movement of troops continually all over the world.' Then I will quote Lord Wolseley about the supplies of the Army. He says, in answer to question 2,267: 'During my time in the Army we have not been supplied with as good material as we ought to have been supplied with. I think, for instance, the tools supplied to the Army are very bad, extremely bad, taking them generally. The picks, shovels, axes, and all those descriptions of tools are very bad.' This, mind you, is the evidence of the Adjutant-General of the Army. With regard to the clothing of our troops Lord Wolseley says: 'I have seen the French Army, the soldiers of the German, and the soldiers of the Italian Army, and, looking at the clothing, I should say that their clothing is made of a decidedly superior quality to what ours is.' I hope that the House will bear that in mind. It has been stated that if the German Army were to be clothed at the same rate of expense as our Army, that would add 300,000*l.* to their expenditure. Then, again, Lord Wolseley says, in answer to question 2,510: 'I am quite sure that if you sent to-morrow for an implement called a billhook, the common billhook that is used in the Army, you will find that it is made of very inferior stuff, little better than hoop-iron. If you chop wood with it the wood chops it.' That is the statement of a man who is speaking from his own experience, and it is a statement which was only made last year. But there is one more statement made by Lord Wolseley which is even more important. In answer to question 2,443, he says: 'I think that one of the most important elements in regimental efficiency is regimental transport, and one of the greatest misfortunes which our Army suffers from

at the present moment is that we have not got even the nucleus of any regimental transport. Of all the troubles we suffer from when we take the field, the want of any regimental transport is the greatest. Now I have given to the House some of the results of our curious system, into which the Government do not seem desirous of having an inquiry. But there are other results which have met with a great chorus of military condemnation. Some right honourable gentlemen will recollect the Crimean war. What was the great feature of that war? The great feature was that while the British soldier was covered with glory, the civil administration was covered with the deepest disgrace. But take the series of scandals in the last few years. Besides the scandals connected with the swords and bayonets of the Army and the cutlasses of the Navy, and that connected with the 43-ton gun, there appears to me to be a very unpleasant business at the present moment about what is known as the 9·2 in. gun. We have not quite arrived at the truth about it, but the Secretary of State for War has assured the House that a gun with a cracked lining is a better one than a gun with a lining which is not cracked. These are matters on which we have not yet full information; but look at the commissariat scandal in Egypt, that terrible and unequalled scandal in connection with the ammunition for the column in the desert. It is not that I want to irritate the authorities by placing upon them personally the responsibility for these matters; I place the responsibility on the system. The system which has produced these results in the past is the same which obtains up to the present time; and not in the slightest, in the most trifling particular has that system been really altered; it is as powerful for evil now as it was then. We are told that there is Parliamentary control; but what has Parliament ever done to bring any single person to justice for these scandals? We have seen over and over again the futility of this alleged Parliamentary control. We have been told that, with regard to the number of field guns, we cannot do what Switzerland, Belgium, Servia, or Roumania could do with ease. A very serious statement was that made by the noble lord the member for Marylebone, which, I think, was a 'calculated indiscretion,' to the effect that we had no gunpowder in

store and were obliged to depend for our gunpowder upon manufactories in a foreign country. I do not know whether the noble lord referred to cocoa powder, but he has stated that there was not sufficient in store.

Lord C. BERESFORD: I said that there was not a sufficient amount in store to meet what would be requisite if we went to war.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: At all events, we have a statement of such importance as that made by the noble lord, who was in office only a very short time ago, and who must be in a position to know.

Now, may I ask the House to judge the system from an economical point of view—that is to say, compare its cost with that of the German system? Such a comparison is very interesting and full of lessons for us. We have the evidence<sup>1</sup> of one of the most distinguished officers in the British Army—namely, General Brackenbury, the head of the Intelligence Department. He was examined as to the cost of the German system. I think it will be admitted that the German system is nearly an ideal system, and that the more nearly we approach to it the more likely is our system to be a satisfactory one. General Brackenbury stated one thing which is most remarkable. He gave the cost of the German War Office and of our own. Our War Office costs 400,000*l.* a year; it contains 693 officials, and manages an army which on a war footing may be considered as amounting to 500,000 men. The German War Office costs 160,000*l.*; this includes the cost of the War Ministries of Bavaria, of Saxony, and of Wurtemberg; and there are only 503 officials. The German War Office, with this small proportion of expenditure, manages to control an army which on a war footing amounts to upwards of 3,000,000 men. Those are broad facts, however they may be explained away by official ingenuity. Now let us look at the cost in the two cases. The expenses of the German army system last year were 21,000,000*l.*, or, deducting the non-effective vote, 19,300,000*l.*, as compared with 14,600,000*l.*, the expenses of the British

<sup>1</sup> This evidence was given before the Select Committee on Army Estimates, of which Lord Randolph Churchill was chairman.



system after deducting its non-effective vote. I asked General Brackenbury whether he did not consider that the best test of any organisation was the number of army corps which could be put into the field after making the various necessary allowances, and General Brackenbury agreed that it was. Well, for an effective cost of 19,300,000*l.* Germany can put into the field nineteen army corps; we are supposed to be able to put into the field two army corps for the sum of 14,600,000*l.* General Brackenbury said that that was a most unfair comparison—that it must be recollected we have a volunteer army; that it is much better paid, fed, and clothed than the German Army; and that if the German Army were paid, fed, and clothed in the same way their expenditure would be much higher. But I was not afraid to follow the general on that ground, and I asked him to add up what that expenditure would be if the German Army were paid and fed and clothed as well as the British Army. I found that to the 19,300,000*l.* should be added the sum of 6,650,000*l.* in respect of pay, 1,300,000*l.* for better food, for clothing 300,000*l.*, and for the item of forage 373,000*l.*; thus making a total altogether, if the pay, clothing, and forage of the German Army were in the same style as ours, of 27,900,000*l.* I add on something more. The German war authorities, no doubt, possess a fund over which the German Parliament has no control in the indemnity which was paid by France in the last war. Out of this military treasury they have constructed enormous fortifications, and added largely to their supply of military stores. Still, it would probably be extravagant to say that they take out of the military chest more than two millions of money a year. Therefore by adding on to the 27,900,000*l.* the sum of 2,000,000*l.* as contributions from the military chest, we shall arrive at a grand total of 30,000,000*l.* So that for 30,000,000*l.*, even supposing their army were kept up on the more extravagant style of the British Army, the Germans can send into the field 19 army corps, as against 14,600,000*l.* for our two army corps, making the cost of each German army corps about 1,500,000*l.*, as against an English cost per corps of 7,000,000*l.* I think those are startling figures. You may say what you like, but there must be something wrong with a system

which shows results so miserably inadequate as compared with those of other military systems.

I cannot pass away from this subject without reminding the House that Germany has, moreover, seventeen first-class fortresses—military camps they might be called—in such condition that they are ready at the shortest notice for any emergency; and that she maintains her army in the most perfect equipment, ready to cross the frontier at a fortnight's notice. As for our fortresses, what have we? We have only four first-class fortresses—Portsmouth, Plymouth, Gibraltar, and Malta; and we are told in the memorandum of the Secretary of State that every one of these fortresses, to make them reasonably safe, requires an enormous amount of money to be spent upon it. And what says the Secretary of State about his two army corps? 'For the First Army Corps,' says the Secretary of State, 'the cavalry division, and the troops for the line of communication, the whole of the necessary outfit, including clothing, arms, accoutrements, equipments, tents, stores, supplies, and vehicles, might have been said to be practically complete'—not that they are complete—'except that every month produces new demands and alterations, and some of the transport *matériel* is not of the newest pattern.' Does the Secretary of State really mean to bring forward that miserable excuse that constant changes in accoutrements and equipment have prevented him from completing the equipment of the First Army Corps? Those things do not change at all events in such short periods of time but that your First Army Corps at least ought to be completely equipped. The next paragraph is still more important. 'For the remaining troops the equipment is partly in existence, and could probably be completed without serious delay.' Partly! Probably! And yet the Secretary of State, after making such a statement, rebukes other persons for what he calls revealing our weakness to foreign powers! If the House of Commons thinks what I have quoted a satisfactory statement to make to the House of Commons in respect of the results of our military system, and if after that it can lightly vote supplies to a system which produces such small and inadequate results, the House of Commons takes a very remarkable view of the situation. I cannot pass from this para-

graph without alluding to the cavalry division of the First Army Corps. Will the House believe that after providing for the wants of the First Army Corps there would not be left in the country for military purposes two thousand cavalry horses? Will the Secretary of State stand up and say that the Commander-in-Chief and the military heads are responsible for this state of things? That is what I want to know. I wish to apologise to the House for detaining it at this length, but the matter is so important that I venture to make even further demands upon the patience of honourable members. I wish to allude to the question of the rifle of the British Army. Now it is a most remarkable thing that there are three distinct operations going on in the Government factories with regard to the rifle of the Army. In the first place, there is a new rifle which is going to be manufactured in certain quantities this year and in larger quantities next year. There is then going on the conversion of the Enfield-Martini rifle—and a most melancholy story that unfolds. Two years ago we spent nearly 300,000*l.* on manufacturing what was considered to be an excellent rifle for the Army, the Enfield Martini. Although a magazine rifle was then before the War Office, the War Office decided that they would not manufacture a magazine rifle but the Enfield-Martini, and they spent the sum I have mentioned in doing so. Now the War Office have decided that they will have a magazine rifle; and thus the money spent on the Enfield-Martini has been absolutely thrown away. And what are they going to do now? They are converting the Enfield-Martini, which has a smaller bore, into the Martini-Henry, which has a larger bore. That is the second operation; and the third operation is that they are continuing to manufacture the Martini-Henry, although it is likely to be superseded very soon by the magazine rifle. The result of all this is, that, supposing this country was invaded in 1890, there would certainly be two rifles, and probably three rifles, in the hands of the British troops defending this country, with certainly two, and probably three, different sorts of ammunition. I think the House will agree that this is a sickening and heart-breaking story. Now, is it not the case that the time has come for vigorous inquiry and for radical reform? A Royal

Commission is asked for, and the Government do not see their way to assenting to the motion, at any rate in the form in which it stands on the paper. A Royal Commission of the ordinary kind would be useless—worse than useless—because it would be composed of men who would meet three or four times in the session and adjourn over the recess, and it would be highly improbable that such a Royal Commission could possibly give a report before next year; probably not before three years would they be able to examine the mass of evidence that would fill a volume or two of Blue-books. In the meantime we should be going on as we are going on now. There are two essential points about a Royal Commission which must be recognised. It must be a Commission of high authority, and it must be a Commission which will work with the utmost expedition. I do not think that anybody can suppose that the need for an inquiry has not arrived. If that is conceded, I tell the House that what we want is a Military Commission, whose function it will be to tell the people what they do not know—what is the real opinion of the military heads upon our existing military state. That has always been kept from the people. We have been asked, ‘Why should we know? what is the necessity for knowing these things? They are known to the military experts and the Government know them.’ The Government know it, but it has been kept from the public. What these high military authorities ought to do is to discover what they know, tell us what we want, and they ought to inquire into the cost of putting things in order and maintaining things in an efficient state. Such a Commission might deliberate and report to the Government in less than six weeks, and might give to the Government and the country and Parliament the military opinion on these points. Can there be any doubt that we should be infinitely better off than we are now? I will read the last extract with which I will trouble the House; it is from the evidence of Lord Wolseley, who said: ‘The greatest misfortune that occurs to me upon this subject arises from the fact that our military requirements have never been inquired into—have never been tabulated or laid down. There is no fixed point up to which we work, whether it is the Commander-in-Chief or any official connected with the

Army; we have had nothing decided by the country as to what the country wants, or as to what our military policy, its aims and requirements are. Q. 2,642.—Then you do not know what you want? A.—We do not know what we want. We do not know what we are working up to. . . . There has never been any authoritative inquiry instituted as to what are the military requirements of the empire.' He recommended a Royal Commission to examine experts on the various topics connected with the subject. If the House consents to an inquiry which is meant, not to enlighten but to blind the country, this House will not represent the opinions of the country. There are other matters to which I wish to refer, but I shall not go into them now. I have said enough to let the House understand the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1886. Year by year I had seen the expenditure growing, and year by year I had seen the results diminishing. Year by year I had seen the distress and disquietude, not only in the mind of the Army but in the mind of the public, growing deeper and stronger. I hoped that by putting that pressure on the spending departments, by cutting off the supplies—I hoped that I might force them and compel the heads of these departments to look into their own affairs and make the necessary reforms; but they would not. What was my position? I was called upon to defend an expenditure which I knew was wasteful. I knew I should be called upon to sustain and maintain a system and an establishment which was rotten, and I concluded that my miserable capacities were not equal to the task, and that I must leave it to some one more qualified than myself for such a duty. The attitude the Government have taken up towards this motion is one of resistance; but what do they call upon us to do? To vote confidence in the existing system. I cannot do that, because I know it is hopelessly bad.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 9, 1888.

[This speech was occasioned by the election of Lord Randolph Churchill as President of the Edgbaston Conservative Club. The first part of the address was devoted to a review of the general features of the session of 1888 down to the month of April, and to an examination of the relative strength of the Government and the Opposition. Lord Randolph then proceeded to consider the actual position of both parties, and the prospect before them. The necessity of reform in the method of Irish government was again strongly insisted upon in this speech.]

WHAT is the reason of the profound tranquillity in Parliament at the present time, and of the great propriety of demeanour on the part of the Opposition? What is the reason of it all? I am particularly anxious to bring before you the moral which I draw from the political position at the present time, because it is a position unique in English history. The reason of the tranquillity which we all rejoice in at the present time, and which we all appreciate, is, that the Government of the Queen is a strong Government, but not too strong. That is the point I wish to bring before your notice. The Government by the necessities of its political position is compelled to be continually, day by day, most cautious, always on the alert; and that is what the Government of England ought to be. In the years that I have been in Parliament I have seen rise and fall two Governments which were striking examples of Governments possessing great and overwhelming Parliamentary strength. I saw the Government—the Tory Government—which came into office in 1874, and I saw the Government which came into office—the Liberal Government—in 1880; and both those

Governments were Governments which possessed overwhelming Parliamentary strength. They both, after a few years, came to utter grief; and I do not believe I am anticipating too much the province of the historian if I venture to doubt whether either of those Governments has left any mark on English history which will be to their enduring praise. Those Governments possessed a position of overwhelming strength in the House of Commons; and the moral I draw is that the possession by a Government of overwhelming Parliamentary strength, and the command by a Government of a highly disciplined and large Parliamentary majority, does not always necessarily lead to good administration, but does very often induce serious Ministerial vices. It leads—I have seen it with my own eyes—it leads on the part of Ministers to undue pride; it leads to disdainful treatment of remonstrances or suggestions coming from faithful followers; it leads to over-confidence on the part of Ministers. Ministers who belong to such a Government think that they are in office for life, and that leads as an inevitable result to great laxity and great carelessness of administration. I hold that the position of the present Government is in many ways an ideal position, because it is a position which preserves them from the danger of falling into the defects and the faults which I have brought to your notice. One marked feature in the position of the present Government is the support of the Liberal Unionist party. That is a support which I would venture to call a happy mixture of loyalty and of independence. It is a support which is strictly conditional, and the conditions are highly honourable both to those who make them and to those who abide by them; but they are conditions which, if you think them over, you will find must make most effectually for good administration and for good legislation. There is another feature to which I attach equal importance in the position of the present Government, and that is the composition of the Tory party. The composition of the Tory party in this Parliament differs widely from that of all former Tory parties in the House of Commons, because the Tory party is mainly composed now, for the first time in its history, of representatives of large and populous towns, who are directly in touch with great masses of our fellow-countrymen, who

possess their confidence, and who are always vividly bearing in mind the pledges by which they gained the confidence of their constituents; and the result is that there is in the Tory party a very large and predominant section who would not be prepared to tolerate for one moment without a most effective and a most vigorous remonstrance any tendency on the part of the Government of the day either to inaction or to reaction. That is a feature of the position of the present Government to which I attach the utmost importance, and from which I deduce the brightest anticipations. There is one more reason, perhaps, which it is worth while to bring before you, why Parliament is fulfilling its duties at the present moment with so much energy and vigour, and in such a satisfactory manner; and that reason is, that for the first time in English history you have a Parliament which directly represents the British and the Irish people, which faithfully and closely reflects the true public mind; and no one who has ever had any experience of going about among the people for political purposes, or who has had any experience of coming before great audiences such as the present, can have the smallest doubt of the earnest and, I may even say, the stern desire of the people that the business of the nation shall be transacted in a creditable and satisfactory manner, and that the traditions of the House of Commons shall be honourably and permanently maintained.

I turn to another topic of equal interest—the state of Ireland. Contrast the state of Ireland now with the state of Ireland at the time I had the honour of addressing you last year. It is altogether transformed. What is the state of Ireland at the present moment? You heard a great deal this time last year about the Plan of Campaign. The Plan of Campaign was being widely adopted by the Irish tenantry, and was a purely illegal and violent course of action. Now you hear very little about the Plan of Campaign, and where it is now pursued it is on a very limited scale and with great secrecy on the part of the Irish leaders. Then turn to the position of that organisation, the National League, and contrast it with the position of the National League last year. Last year it was full of activity and destructive energy. This year we find it comparatively



quiet. It is, as it were, lying low ; and really except for the demonstration of yesterday—which seems to have been a very half-hearted affair, not at all supported by the bulk of the population of the districts in which it took place—except for the demonstration of yesterday we might almost say that the National League for all practical purposes had ceased to exist. Not only that. Some very unpleasant features of Irish society have been a great deal modified. I take boycotting, of which we heard so much last year—a cruel, a barbarous, and a detestable practice. Boycotting, as is proved by official statistics, has largely diminished, and diminished to such an extent that really for practical political purposes we need hardly take count of it. More than that : the persons in Ireland of one class and another who were under special protection of the police—the number of those persons has also decreased. More than that : you find in Ireland that juries, for the first time for some years, are beginning to do their duty without fear, and that they are beginning to convict criminals who are justly proved to have been criminals on the evidence which is laid before them. The consequence is, that crime in Ireland no longer has the character of being committed with impunity. Crime in Ireland is no longer unpunished ; and what is the result ? I do not believe, if you go back ten years or more, you will find a time when crime in Ireland has been so slight and so insignificant as it is at the present moment. Suppose I turn to the position of the Irish tenantry. I learn on the highest authority from many quarters that contracts are being fairly carried out ; that rents are being fairly paid where the ability to pay rent exists ; and that where the ability to pay rent does not really exist, the landlords of Ireland are making large and due remissions of rent, and are treating their tenants with all consideration. And the consequence is that you have in Ireland at the present moment a great revival of confidence and a great revival of the feeling of security. I do not believe that will be denied, even in the ranks of our opponents, by those who may be men of thought and of information. If that is the case, we may be satisfied with the great justification which that affords of the line which we, the Unionist party, take on Irish matters. But we must be careful to be

on our guard against the danger of relying too exclusively on what is called a coercion policy, or what I should call a strong and a severe administration of the law. I have seen two Governments, gentlemen, make that error. I saw the Tory Government of 1874 make that error, and I saw Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1880 make that error. Having been goaded into passing exceptional measures for the government of Ireland, and finding that those exceptional measures produced the results which they were sure to produce if they were properly administered—viz. tranquillity and order—they were disposed to rely solely upon the results of those measures, and were apathetic and indisposed to recur to what I would call the more permanent, the more lasting remedies for Irish grievances. Gentlemen, against that we must be on our guard, because we have the lessons of the past to inform us. I hold that the present Government are perfectly right, perfectly justified, in making the present session of Parliament a British session. I trust that they will pass many measures which will tend to the development of British prosperity; but I must remind you that there is much to be done in Ireland in the way of legislation, and I think that probably next session, we shall find, will be to a great extent an Irish session. We owe much to Ireland. Ireland has gone through great social crises, great political crises, on account of the blunders or the shortcomings of British administration; and we Unionists have always asserted that it is in our power to do as much for the prosperity of Ireland through the machinery of the Imperial Parliament as Ireland could do if she possessed a Parliament of her own. Therefore I venture, in this time of comparative tranquillity, and in this time of comparative promise, to put in a word of timely warning, and to remind you, who represent the rank and file and strength of the Unionist party, that, whether on the land question in Ireland, or whether on the question of local government, or whether on the question of Irish education, there is much which Parliament can do, and much which Parliament must do; and I rejoice at the present condition of Ireland, at its tranquillised condition, because I believe that if that condition continues as it ought to continue, we shall find the House

of Commons next session most busily and arduously engaged in the solution of the three great Irish problems—of the land, the development of Irish local liberty, and the education question.

I pass from the state of Ireland, and I come to another subject of great importance and great interest at the present moment, and that is the Bill which has been introduced by the present Administration for the government of our rural districts. That is perhaps the largest question that Parliament will be called upon to deal with for some years, but the Government have acted wisely in dealing with a large question in a large spirit. The foundation of the Bill which they have introduced is like the foundation of the British Constitution—a purely democratic foundation. I was never more relieved in my life than when I found there was no nonsense in that Bill with regard to the plural vote, with regard to *ex officio* representation, or with regard to proportionate representation. It is a Bill based upon a purely democratic foundation. Every ratepayer will have an equal voice in the selection of a representative for the government of local affairs. Not only have the Government proposed to constitute councils for the administration of localities which are to be elected in a purely democratic manner, but they have given to these councils large, responsible, and heavy duties; and to aid them in the performance of those duties they have given them large financial resources and authority. On this question of the new county councils, a proposition which I believe to be as great and as wide, and almost as revolutionary—I use that word in a good sense—a proposition as has ever been proposed, the only danger I see is, that the county councils may be tempted into financial extravagance. That is the principal danger. You constitute a new body, you give it great duties, you give it considerable financial resources; and that body, fearful, perhaps, of risking its popularity with those who elected it, prefers for its expenditure to have recourse to a mortgage on the future rather than on the pockets of those who called it together. That is a great danger. It has been a danger which to some extent your town councils have fallen into; and if we learn a lesson from the operations of our town councils and of our corporations, we shall be very careful to

restrict very rigidly and very severely the borrowing powers of the new county councils; and I think it would be an improvement, and a proposal worthy of consideration, either absolutely to prohibit the new county councils from contracting a loan under any circumstances whatever, or, if they want to contract a loan, to force them to go to Parliament, lay their case before Parliament, and to get the law passed to give them power for the special purposes which they require to borrow for. That, I think, would be an improvement on the Bill, and if we can put in the way of these county councils, in their recourse to loans, I will not say an insuperable obstacle, but a great fence which they will find it most difficult to jump without a fall, I believe we shall obviate the only real, serious danger which attaches to the proposals which the Government have made. I know there are objections brought against the Bill by our opponents to the effect that it does not go far enough, that there ought to have been included within the duties of the county councils the administration of the Poor Law and the administration of education. On that point I have only this to say—and I think it is an effectual answer—that nothing would have been more imprudent and nothing more foolish or short-sighted than to overweight these new bodies at the outset of their career. They have been given large duties. Suppose they get to work rapidly, and suppose they work well, nothing will be easier than to proceed to a further amalgamation and a further consolidation of our local government; nothing will be easier than to hand over to them the administration of the Poor Law and the administration of education; but I think you probably would have broken them down at the outset, you might have destroyed all their chances of success, if you had given them, in addition to the duties given them under the Bill now before Parliament, the heavy duties, the difficult duties of the administration of the Poor Law and of education in this country. I know the Radical party were terribly flustered and taken aback when this Bill was introduced. They could not believe it was possible the Tory party would introduce so good a Bill. I had been telling them for a long time that if the Tory party got a chance of legislating, they would legislate wisely

and well. But they paid no attention to me, and they were terribly put about and terribly disappointed when the Tory Government produced a Bill which, by the consent of all, was an admirable measure, and they consoled themselves with the thought that the Bill could not possibly pass into law. They said, 'The Bill will not pass, that is one great comfort.' Well, why should it not pass? I believe it will pass. I believe so for several reasons. I believe it will pass, because I know that the Government are determined to pass it; and I believe it will pass, because I do not know who is going to oppose it. The country gentlemen are not going to oppose it. The country gentlemen have had opportunities lately in their meetings at quarter sessions of considering the Bill, and I think that, with hardly an exception, the great body of country gentlemen have accepted the principle of the Bill. The country gentlemen have acted, with regard to this Bill, with that patriotism and that broadness of mind and that strong common sense which throughout history have distinguished the country gentlemen of England, and the possession of which has given to English country gentlemen that great and high position which they possess and have possessed. The country gentlemen considering this Bill have come to the conclusion that the Bill is a sound Bill, that the principles of the Bill contain nothing in reality revolutionary; and the country gentlemen, although undoubtedly they had pride, and rightly had pride, in their own limited administration of county affairs, have come to the conclusion that the duties which are to be placed upon those new bodies are far too large and too heavy to be performed by a body which was not thoroughly representative and elective, and they have come to the conclusion that, for the proper administration of local affairs, and for the more simplified and, I hope, for the more economical administration of local affairs, it was their duty to accept this Bill, to give the best of their experience and the best of their knowledge and the best of their energy towards the good working of this measure, and to put aside altogether any personal feeling of prejudice or of, perhaps, disappointed ambition which might have tended to make them disapprove of or oppose the measure. Nothing that I know of in the history

of English country gentlemen has been more creditable to them than their acceptance in principle of the great proposals which have been laid before Parliament with regard to local government.

But who else is going to oppose? The country gentlemen are not going to oppose. Are the licensed victuallers going to oppose it? Well, I do not think they will; besides, if they do it does not much matter; because, suppose they were to carry on an effectual opposition to the Bill, we must recollect that the licensing clauses are not essential to the Bill. By no means. They might be dropped out of the Bill, and the Bill might equally well pass into law.<sup>1</sup> But I have this to say to the licensed victuallers, and it is really the sincere warning of a friend, that if they do succeed either in destroying this Bill, or in throwing out of the Bill the part which affects their interests, of this they may be certain, that they never will get such terms again as are offered to them in this Bill. Never—never. Their interests are recognised under this Bill as vested interests, and for those interests they are entitled in one form or another to receive compensation, and if they are so imprudent as to throw away the offers which are now made to them by a Government essentially Conservative, and by a Government which, I think I may say, is naturally their friend, they will have made a mistake which before many months, and certainly before more than two or three years are over, they will bitterly and unavailingly regret? Who, then, will oppose the Bill? If the country gentlemen and the licensed victuallers, who are sensible and practical people, do not oppose the Bill, will the temperance party oppose the Bill? Well, I have great sympathies with the temperance party. I do not think they are at all sensible or practical people. But I thoroughly respect the object at which they aim, and I am in entire accord with the great national object of reducing as far as possible and practicable our great national expenditure upon alcoholic liquor. The temperance party will surely recognise that the great principle of local option is embalmed and enshrined in the Bill, though that principle may not be carried to the

<sup>1</sup> This was what really happened. The licensing clauses were all withdrawn, the opposition to them having proceeded to some extent from the licensed victuallers as well as from the temperance party.

extreme length which they would wish, and though it may not be likely to produce the extreme effect which they desire to produce. Still the principle of local option is there, and the temperance party, I think, will not be foolish enough to imperil the acceptance by Parliament of the principle of local option by any unholy alliance either with unscrupulous Radicals, or unscrupulous licensed victuallers, or people of that kind.<sup>1</sup> Therefore I look in vain for the quarter where any opposition to this great Bill is to come from. When Mr. Gladstone introduced the Reform Bill of 1884 he admitted that there were many shortcomings in that Bill, but he appealed to Parliament to pass it, 'because,' he said, 'it is in itself a great Bill and a good Bill. Do not risk it.' And so I, speaking to you, and speaking, if I might, to the classes whom I have alluded to, say, 'Do not risk this Bill. Use all your influence in whatever way you possess influence, whether you possess it locally or outside the limits of your locality, to put pressure upon those who are your friends to pass this Bill into law.' Just as the reform of the municipal corporations was the natural sequence of the great Parliamentary reform of 1832, so the reform of your county government is the natural sequence of the great Parliamentary Reform Bill of 1884. And just as the effect of the Municipal Corporations Bill was excellent on the whole and beneficial to your town population, so, I believe, will be the effect of the Local Government Bill now before Parliament upon the interests of your rural population. Where you have, I regret to say, at the present moment political stagnation and political inactivity, you will have, under the operation of this Bill, political circulation and brisk political activity; and I cannot but think that the condition of the labouring classes in our rural districts must be sensibly elevated and sensibly improved when the labouring classes feel and know that, for the first time in English history, the management of their own local affairs and the development of their local interests are absolutely in their own power.

[After referring to the Budget then before the House of

<sup>1</sup> The temperance party resisted the licensing clauses because they embodied the principle of compensation for interference with public-houses. It was maintained that by this principle a right of property in connection with the liquor traffic was established for the first time.

Commons, and subsequently greatly modified, Lord Randolph Churchill made a concluding reference to the question, What is a Tory democracy ?]

I should like to have dwelt upon the subject of imperial expenditure and of the great importance of economy in the public service. But the question is too large to begin upon at this hour of the evening. It will keep for another occasion. There is a great deal to be said on it, and the progress which we have made has been very small, and there is an immense deal of work to be done in that direction. But, to bring all these remarks of mine to a conclusion, I go back upon the observations which I made at the commencement of my speech. I think I have shown you by actual proof, whether in the proceedings of the House of Commons, whether in the state of Ireland, whether in the legislation proposed to the House of Commons, or whether in the financial propositions, that the political sky is serene, and that the prospects of our party are bright and hopeful. I can truly say that such a state of things is most satisfactory to me personally, because I cannot but feel that we have nearly realised what was some years ago apparently only a dream, the dream of Tory democracy. You remember with what scoffs and scornings and with what sneers and ridicule the phrase 'Tory democracy' was received when I first made use of it in the House of Commons in the year 1882. Nothing was too bad, nothing was too taunting, nothing was too absurd to apply to the idea, or to those who dared to sustain such an idea in public. You in Birmingham were the first publicly to associate yourselves with the policy which is contained in the phrase Tory democracy. What is Tory democracy? Tory democracy is a democracy which supports the Tory party; but with this important qualification, that it supports a Tory party, not from mere caprice, not from momentary disgust or indignation with the results of Radicalism, but a democracy which supports the Tory party because it has been taught by experience and by knowledge to believe in the excellence and the soundness of true Tory principles. But Tory democracy involves also another idea of equal importance. It involves the idea of a Government who in all branches of their policy and in all features of their administration are animated



by lofty and by liberal ideas. That is Tory democracy. It may be that I am premature in thinking that we have attained absolutely and permanently that great ideal in our political life; but, at any rate, surely it is not too much to say that we are on the high road to that end. I rejoice exceedingly at the present state of things for two reasons—in the first place, because for this idea you and I and others have laboured long and hard; and, secondly, because it is in the realisation of that idea that I believe, and that I know, will be found the real strength of the empire and the only hope of Britain.

## REFORMED LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR IRELAND.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 25, 1888.

[This speech gave some offence to many members of the Tory party, who had forgotten, or had never properly acquainted themselves with, Lord Randolph's Churchill's previous uncompromising declarations on the same subject. Not by Coercion Bills alone can any party hope to govern Ireland or settle the 'Irish Question.' This was the burden of all Lord Randolph's Irish speeches; but because some people chose to shut their ears to it, they accused the speaker of inconsistency. The very demand for 'simultaneity' in dealing with local government for England and Ireland, which was made in the speech of August 1886, was enough to prove that Lord Randolph was not now taking up a new position. That demand, as he here stated to the House of Commons, was fully recognised by Lord Salisbury's Government. Their opinions had changed, and it may be urged that circumstances had also changed; but it cannot for a moment be affirmed that Lord Randolph Churchill was to blame for this, or that he had receded from an attitude which he still held to be sound and wise. In this, as on so many other questions, it was the party itself which had shifted its ground—not Lord Randolph Churchill.]

IN all the now not inconsiderable number of years during which I have been in this House, I have never found myself placed in so difficult a position as at the present moment. The question of local government in Ireland is by no means a novelty. Parties have taken up different attitudes upon this question after long deliberation and much discussion, and the respective attitudes of those parties cannot, I think, be lightly changed. I observed in the speech of the right honourable gentleman<sup>1</sup> who has just sat down a strong tendency to a course of opinion and policy which would not, to my mind, if carried out prac-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Balfour, Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant.

tically, be at all in accordance with the attitude taken up upon local government in Ireland by what, I believe, is the vast majority of the Unionist party. The Chief Secretary must be aware, although he was not in the Cabinet at the time I am going to speak of, that at the critical, the very anxious, and the very difficult moment at which Lord Salisbury's Government succeeded to power, they had, within a comparatively brief period, to decide upon what policy they would announce to Parliament as representing mainly the Tory party, and to a great extent the whole of the Unionist party, with regard to local government in Ireland. All the circumstances upon which the Chief Secretary has enlarged this afternoon, or, at any rate, circumstances of a very similar character showing all the defects which exist at the present moment in the working of popular institutions in Ireland, and showing all the dangers that might be anticipated from the extension of popular institutions or the establishment of new ones, were before the Government of Lord Salisbury at the time when they had to take a decision—a most momentous decision—with reference to this question. It has been supposed—and this supposition I have never before noticed, although it has been rather widely given effect to in the press—that in the declaration which it was my duty to make at that table in August 1886<sup>1</sup> I was stating that which was more my own opinion than the opinion of her Majesty's Government. I think it right to say that that was not so in any degree whatever. The declaration which I made at that table at that time was, as far as it related to Ireland, a written declaration. Every sentence of it, I might almost go as far as to say every word of it, represented the opinions of the Government, and had been submitted to and assented to by the Prime Minister himself, and by the Chief Secretary for Ireland of that day.<sup>2</sup> More than that: the declaration I made with regard to Ireland—I recollect it as well as if I had made it yesterday—I made without one dissentient voice, and without one dissentient murmur being raised among the honourable gentlemen who belong to the Tory party. More than that: I was given to understand in the plainest way that the declaration of the Government thus made

<sup>1</sup> See vol ii., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

received the full and entire approval of the leaders of the Liberal Unionist party. But why am I anxious to dwell upon these matters? It is because on this point, which, I fear, is likely to raise some difference of opinion before long, if it does not now, the idea of the Government at that time was that a certain just extension, within reasonable limits, of local government in Ireland was to be looked upon as a remedy for the great evils which have been dwelt upon by the Chief Secretary this afternoon. I venture to say that if those who are on this side of the House will carry back their minds to the terrible struggle in which we had all to take part in 1886—one in which I may without egotism claim to have borne no inconsiderable part—they must agree that there is not a single member of the Unionist party who would under the stress of that struggle have stood up on an English platform, and taken the line upon the extension of local government in Ireland which has been assumed this afternoon by speakers representing the Unionist party. I feel certain that there are none (murmurs of dissent)—well, very few. It fell to my lot to have to watch very closely the course of that election, and the attitude taken up on this question by members of the Tory party at that time; and I do recollect that the pledges given by the Unionist party were large and liberal, were distinct and full, and that there was no reservation in those pledges, with respect to all the defects pointed out this afternoon in the Irish character and in respect of Irish unfitness for local government—nothing of the kind. We pledged ourselves that we would at the very earliest opportunity extend to Ireland the same amount of local government which we might give to England and Scotland. I venture to say—and I do not care how much I am contradicted or what the consequences may be—that that was the foundation of the Unionist party, and I venture to say more—that that is the only platform on which you can resist Repeal. If you are going to the English people, relying merely upon the strength of your executive power—if you are going to preach to the English people that the Irish must for an indefinite time be looked upon as an inferior community—that they are in every respect unfit for the privileges which the English people themselves enjoy—

then I tell you that you may retain that position for a time, but only for a time, and that the time will probably be a short one.

I do not know whether I am justified in asserting that the Chief Secretary, in representing the policy of the Government on this Bill, wishes the House and the public to understand that the question of local government in Ireland is to be dealt with only when, in the opinion of the Government, the state of the country will be so tranquil or so orderly as to justify it. (Ministerial cheers.) Yes, that may be cheered; but that was not your position at the general election. Are we to understand that in the event of Parliament settling the great principles of local government for England this year, they will be prepared next year, so far as circumstances will permit, to extend similar privileges to Ireland? The words I used in representing the Government at that table were, that in approaching this momentous question of local government we should do so with similarity, equality, and simultaneity, as far as the circumstances of the three countries would permit. The time has gone by altogether for me to bear, and I will be content no longer to bear, solely, the responsibility of those words, in which I represented the policy of the Government; and I do not think that there would be a *bonâ fide* carrying out of the policy I then announced if Ireland is not to have a measure of local government until the state of order in that country is satisfactory to the Executive Government. The history of the question of Irish local government is somewhat interesting, but we on this side of the House, who pride ourselves on being a progressive party, must take care that we do not expose ourselves to a well-sustained indictment of being responsible for a reactionary policy. The House will remember that the Tory party have already dealt, or attempted to deal, with local government in Ireland. You must go back a great many years—I do not know whether that attempt is within the knowledge of the Chief Secretary or of any of his colleagues, but it happens to be within my knowledge, because I have for many years closely followed the course of Irish affairs. Is the Chief Secretary aware that at a period of Irish history when the state of the country was in no respect better than it is now, the Tory Government proposed a Bill for the county

government of Ireland which provided for the abolition of grand juries, and for the establishment of an elected representative council, and with respect to that county council there was only this main difference between that Bill and the Bill proposed to-day—that under this Bill the barony is to elect three representatives, under the former Bill the ratepayers were to elect two representatives and the justices one? Who was the person who introduced that Bill into the House of Commons? It was that pure representative of unbending Toryism the Right Honourable James Lowther, without any exception most representing the *ne plus ultra* of unadulterated Toryism. What will be our position if, having in the year 1879, when the Tory Government in respect of executive power was very differently situated to what it is at present, proposed a Bill for the county government of Ireland, we now decline to give to Ireland local privileges which we are willing to give to England until we are satisfied that those local privileges will not be abused, and that the state of the country is perfectly tranquil? It would have been impossible for me, having taken the line I have taken in the country, in this House, and in the position which I had the honour to occupy—it would have been impossible for me, consistently with common honesty, to have sat silent and allowed it to be supposed that I personally associated myself with the views which seem to have been expressed by the Chief Secretary and by certain Irish members on this side of the House to-day. It often happens that I am asked to go down into the country to address audiences, and when I go down I never lose an opportunity of telling the people to the best of my ability that it is the intention of the Tory party—the Unionist party—to legislate largely and liberally for the removal of Irish grievances. (Cheers.) Yes, but I claim a specific performance of that pledge. I look for a *bonâ fide* and a prompt interpretation of it; and though honourable members do not in the least object to my winning applause at great mass meetings in the country by the utterance of such opinions, there seems to be a considerable difference of opinion when I attempt to carry them to a practical conclusion. At any rate I have made my protest. I have declined to remain silent under what I believe to be not only a

departure from the original policy of the Government, but what is also, I think, a ruinous line to follow. If you give to the Irish the same liberties which you give to the English, and if you tell them that after you have settled the English local government measure you will give to them the same or similar privileges, you will do much to mitigate the ill-feeling that has been produced in recent years, and you will do much to wile away from the ranks of the right honourable gentleman opposite many who are now following him because they despair, and not unreasonably despair, of getting from a Government on this side of the House the legislation which they desire. It is very well now for you to think that a general election is far off, that your position is still a very strong one, and that nothing can hurt it. You may persist in an attitude which is a denial to Ireland of what are her rights; but the day will come when you will have to argue this question again before the English people, when you will have to point to the fact that the promises you made with regard to local government in Ireland have not been redeemed. If an election came next year you would have to admit that; and nobody can tell when an election may come. At any rate, you defeated the policy of Repeal which was advocated by the right honourable gentleman opposite, but you defeated it only because the nation believed you would not withhold from Ireland for one day longer than Parliamentary possibility allowed the same liberties which you claim for your own people. I shall certainly not vote for this particular Bill; viewing the interpretation which has been placed by the Chief Secretary on the amendment, I cannot conscientiously consent to vote for the amendment. Therefore I shall be obliged to follow the most unpleasant course of taking no part in the division; but I wish the House, and those outside the House who may look upon me as at all responsible for Irish policy, to know that I adhere in their integrity, their fulness, and their distinctness to the pledges which I made at that table as representing the Government of the Queen and the Unionist party—that a large and liberal measure of local government would be meted out to Ireland without undue delay.

THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.—PUBLIC  
EXPENDITURE.

PRESTON, MAY 16, 1888.

[It will be observed that in this speech the duty of the Conservative party to carry out reform of Local Government in Ireland was again urged, and it is worthy of being placed on record that the immense audience, thoroughly representative of Lancashire, received these remarks with hearty approval. The necessity of reform in the public service, one of the great features of Lord Randolph's domestic policy, was also most thoroughly endorsed by the meeting. It was only by a limited section of the press or the party that attempts were still made to discredit this policy. The absurd charge that Lord Randolph Churchill was endeavouring to cripple the defences of the country was once more thoroughly disposed of in this speech. He showed that the effect of his policy would be to prevent waste and jobbery, and greatly to strengthen all our resources.]

I ASSURE you that it is with feelings of unusual gratification and pleasure that I find myself in Preston this evening. It recalls to me pleasant recollections, because I remember that I was here in the last days of 1880, in this very building, addressing a large and important meeting,<sup>1</sup> and I look back upon that meeting with feelings of peculiar interest, because it was the first public meeting of any importance or any considerable dimensions which I had had the honour of addressing, and the great indulgence and the cordial welcome which the inhabitants of Preston accorded me on that occasion, and the patience and generosity with which they listened to the remarks which I then made—I, who at that time occupied a position of the utmost

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., p. 11, for the speech delivered at that time.



insignificance in the political world—were really, I may say, the main and principal cause which has induced me in all subsequent times never to shrink, never to hesitate, from laying my opinions on political matters frankly and freely before great assemblies of my countrymen. In 1880 was my first experience of addressing a public meeting and my first visit for a political purpose to Lancashire. Since then I have often had the honour of addressing Lancashire audiences. I have always accustomed myself to look upon Lancashire as, I may say, the mainspring of the Tory party in England, and I have never addressed a public meeting in Lancashire without going back to political life and political work with renewed energy and renewed hope. Since the end of the year 1880 many things have happened. Many changes have taken place, but as far as I can make out in Preston you have not much changed. The Tory party here occupies at the present moment, as it did in the year 1880, the position of proud and indomitable preponderance which was so manifest in the dark days of that period. Now you have become so strong, and your opponents are relatively so feeble, that I have a sort of idea you have within recent years once or twice permitted yourselves the luxury of slight differences of opinion amongst yourselves—a most wholesome and healthy exercise so long as you are perfectly convinced that the enemy can derive no advantage from the dispute. It must be, to those friends of mine who are on this platform, and who are members of Parliament, a most encouraging spectacle—the spectacle of a great town like Preston, one of the leading manufacturing towns of England, and one of the glories of England—that a town such as that should through so many years and over so long a period, through good report and evil report, through good fortune and through ill-fortune, have steadfastly and unhesitatingly adhered to the principles which the Tory party profess.

The Tory party has changed since those days in one very material feature. In 1880, when I was last in Preston, the Tory party was in the position of a weak minority in the House of Commons. It had before it long and weary years, apparently, of hopeless opposition; but now its position has totally altered. It occupies the most powerful position in the House of Commons;

and the destinies of the Empire and the ruling of the fortunes of the people of this country are now in the hands of a Tory administration. In 1880, when I was here last, the whole of the remarks which I ventured to address to the meeting were directed to the state of Ireland. At the time Ireland was a subject uppermost in men's minds, as it indeed occupies them now. Ireland was just then either commencing, or had altogether entered upon, a terrible period of disorder, of anarchy, almost of revolution, a period marked by much crime, by much illegality, by much suffering, and by much distress. That was a period when what might be called Gladstonian remedies were being tried in Ireland under circumstances of apparently the most favourable character. Nothing at that time could resist Mr. Gladstone's Government. He had a free hand. He had no opposition to deal with worth speaking of. He was at liberty to work his will in Ireland, and that will he certainly worked, and with what effect did he work it? He tried the severest repression. He tried concessions to popular agitation of the most reckless kind, and what was the result? For five years in Ireland law and order practically ceased to exist. For five years in Ireland the Government of the Queen had no hold upon the people, and I suspect it is the bitter recollection of those five years of Irish government which more than anything else gives us a warning never again, if we can help it, to run the risk, under any circumstances whatever, of placing Mr. Gladstone at the head of the British Government.

Compare the state of Ireland now with the state of Ireland in 1881. What is the state of Ireland now? It is not attempted to be denied that order is being restored in that country; that law is now recognised and asserted; that all lawful contracts are being fairly carried out and fairly abided by; that occupiers of the land are paying the rents for the land which they contracted to pay; and, moreover, the land is to a large extent being purchased by the occupiers from the landlords, and to a large extent the occupying tenantry of Ireland are, by the facilities which the law has placed in their power, assuming to themselves the responsibilities of freeholders—a great guarantee for the future tranquillity of the country. But

more than that, the prices of produce are rising; they have risen most remarkably within the last six months, and the danger of failure or of distress arising from very low prices has been practically removed. A friend of mine once told me that some one once said to Mr. O'Connell, 'Why don't you get up an agitation on this question of Ireland?' And Mr. O'Connell said, 'How can you get up an agitation when butter is fifty-six shillings a firkin?' And so I think that, as an agitation in Ireland depends mainly on real agricultural distress, the fact should be brought to your notice that since October last store cattle have risen 7*l.* per head in price. On all these grounds Her Majesty's Government occupy, perhaps, a stronger position in Ireland than any Government has occupied for many years. They possess—I am glad they do possess—very large powers for asserting the supremacy of the law among the Irish people. But not only do they possess those powers, but as far as I can judge they are being rewarded with considerable success, simply because they are fighting a dying agitation. With the people who have lived on agitation the most powerful influences have been at work. I allude to the remarkable pronouncement of the Pope with regard to the proceedings and methods by which the National League in Ireland has hitherto sustained this desperate agitation.<sup>1</sup> Those methods have been condemned by the highest religious authority whom the bulk of the Irish people recognise. Other Governments in former days often longed for such an intervention and such a pronouncement from the Church of Rome. Other Governments in former days have often earnestly striven to obtain such a pronouncement, but they did not succeed; and it is not to be denied that persons who have been involved in the management of Irish affairs, and persons who have been interested in the fortunes of that country, have often deeply regretted that the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland had not as a rule been found on the side of law and order in that country. I cannot venture on that account to cast upon them any severe censure. It required, I consider, great moral courage and the

<sup>1</sup> A decree from the Vatican had recently denounced the 'Plan of Campaign,' and incidentally condemned the National League.

exercise of very high statesmanship on the part of the Roman Pontiff to make the pronouncement with regard to Irish agitation which he has recently made. We must recollect that the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland are dependent for their temporal support upon the Irish people. Irish people, moreover, make an offering of a most respectable, and indeed, I may say, of a most generous character to the annual revenues of the Holy See: and it has been very difficult—and I quite understand the difficulties in which the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church have found themselves—for them to set themselves in open and strong hostility to an agitation in Ireland which was genuinely a national agitation; and we cannot pronounce hasty blame because the attitude of the Catholic clergy in Ireland has not been in recent years of that character which we might have wished.

There is one thing which confirms me in my view of the improved state of Ireland, and I say it in no disparagement whatever of the recent action of the Vatican. The one thing which makes me feel certain that the agitation, which has proved such a stumbling-block to other Governments, is dying out, is that I do not think if that agitation had not been dying out, if that agitation had not ceased to be a genuinely national agitation, the Church of Rome would have ventured to take up the strong position which it has taken. At any rate we have the fact, and a most important fact it is, that there has emanated from the Vatican a forcible condemnation of the methods by which the National League sustain their agitation in Ireland. I said a few moments ago that the intervention of the Church of Rome on the side of the Executive Government, on the side of law and order in Ireland, had often been hoped for and often tried for. I observe from the speeches of members of the Repeal party in England and Ireland, and I am informed also that in the opinion of Mr. Gladstone himself, the action of the Pope has been a most injudicious action, an action which will have no good effect on Ireland at all. But, curiously enough, while they express this opinion, they also commit themselves to expressions of the greatest possible indignation against Her Majesty's Government, whom they suspect of having prompted the

action of the Pope. But, on this subject, as on so many others, Mr. Gladstone is terribly embarrassed by former utterances and former actions. It will be no surprise to you to learn, or to be reminded, that although many Ministers, including Lord Palmerston and Lord Derby, have tried to get the Church of Rome on the side of law and order in Ireland, no Minister made more desperate efforts to gain that support than Mr. Gladstone himself. Have we forgotten the Errington mission? If ever a negotiation descended to the level of intrigue—ay, and a very shabby intrigue—that negotiation was the Errington mission, for which Mr. Gladstone's Government, and Lord Granville in particular, were responsible. What was the object of the Errington mission, the main object or the particular peg rather, on which it at last most utterly broke down? It was no less than this: that an unavowed and secret agent of the British Government—a spy, as it were, of the British Government in the courts of the Vatican—attempted to come between the free choice of the clergy of the diocese of Dublin and the decision of the Pope, and to get the Pope to nominate as Archbishop of Dublin a certain Dr. Moran, in opposition to the wishes of the clergy of the diocese of Dublin, who had elected Dr. Walsh.<sup>1</sup> That was the object of Mr. Gladstone's Government for which Mr. Errington was sent out to Rome. Dr. Walsh was a priest, a most eminent and respectable cleric, who represented strong Nationalist views, and Dr. Moran was supposed to represent more directly the views which had been held by Cardinal Cullen, of whom, I believe, he was a relative. But imagine Mr. Gladstone, who now with all his followers finds so much fault with the Government for being suspected of interfering with the actions of the Roman Pontiff, imagine that Mr. Gladstone, who through Mr. Errington endeavoured to upset the free nomination of the clergy of the

<sup>1</sup> In the House of Commons (August 3, 1885) Mr. O'Brien read a letter from Sir G. Errington to Lord Granville, in which the writer spoke of the 'strong pressure' he could bring to bear upon the Pope, and announced his intention of keeping 'the Vatican in good humour about you.' At this time it was denied that Sir G. Errington represented the Government in any way at the Vatican. Sir G. Errington was in the House when the letter referred to was read, and did not deny its authenticity.

diocese of Dublin and impose on that diocese an archbishop whom the diocese of Dublin would not elect, now accusing the Government of intriguing with Rome. I cannot find that the action of the Pope, which undoubtedly is action of immense weight and value to the cause of law and order in Ireland, has in any way been prompted or promoted, directly or indirectly, by the present Government. If the present Government had any agent in Rome, that agent was an avowed agent. He was an agent who went out with an avowed mission. He occupied one of the highest positions any gentleman can occupy in this country. I am alluding to the Duke of Norfolk, who brought to the Pope the congratulations of our Queen on the completion of the jubilee of His Holiness. I think it is extremely rational to suppose that the Duke of Norfolk represented to his Holiness the views which were held generally by the vast majority of the English people as to the state of things in Ireland, and as to the remedies which that state of things required. But we have it on the highest authority that there was no official communication of any sort or kind on that subject. The action of the Pope—and that makes it all the more valuable—has been purely spontaneous, because long before the Duke of Norfolk went to Rome the Pope sent his own agent to Ireland, for he had reason to doubt whether he was receiving accurate reports from that country, and he sent his own agent to Ireland to report exactly as to what was occurring; and it is upon the report of his own agent that he has taken action, and that action has been a purely spontaneous action, and it has not only been spontaneous, but it has been most deliberate. More than a year and a half elapsed before the Vatican authorities would bring themselves to pronounce a final decision. It has been spontaneous and it has been deliberate, and as it has not been the result of a scrubby intrigue like the Errington mission, as it will be valuable, so it will be weighty, so it will be accepted by the people of Ireland. What I am leading up to is this, that you have three forces for good working in Ireland. The first force is a negative force: it is the collapse of the agitation—the collapse of the agitation from the sheer process of the conflagration burning itself out. The second force for good is the advanta-

geous position which the Government occupy for the preservation of law, the restoration of tranquillity, and the revival of confidence and individual security. The third force for good is the weighty condemnation by the Pope, speaking as the head of the Church, of the methods of boycotting and of those immoral and illegal methods known as the Plan of Campaign, by which, and by which alone, the National League laid hold of the Irish people.

What is the moral which I draw from all this? I am not afraid to proclaim that the moral for the Unionist party is, 'Stick steadily to your programme.' I know there are some who will say—and it is a very natural frame of mind, one you very often come across in various other spheres of life—'Oh, let well alone; do nothing; trust in your coercive powers.' I think that would be a shortsighted policy. Suppose a farmer ploughed a field, and, having expended a great deal of labour in bringing it into condition, said, 'I will do no more with it. I will leave it. It is a great expense and trouble. If I sow it, weeds will grow up and I will have trouble. I will allow it to remain fallow and let it produce nothing.' Do you think he would be a sensible agriculturist? You are rapidly getting the fields of Ireland into the condition when you can proceed to sow the seeds of conciliation and concession. We, Unionists, must be very careful to fulfil our pledges to the people of this country. No Government can go before the electorate with any hope of salvation unless they have fulfilled the promises they have made to the people. Former Governments have fallen because they have been obliged to go before the electorate with a record of broken promises, and you never had a more signal and conspicuous instance than the fate of Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1885, when that Government, having broken and violated every pledge which it had made, was decisively repudiated by a large majority of the borough constituencies of this country. I think that the position which I take up upon the subject of future policy in Ireland, is an unanswerable position. If in the year 1879, when the Tory party was in office, when the Tory party had no great powers for asserting the law in Ireland, when the country was ravaged by famine and distress, when agitation was

rife, when the general election was impending—if at that time the Tory party came forward and offered to the Irish people a Bill for the extension of their local liberties, of by no means an illiberal character; if in January 1886, when the Tory Government occupied a position in the House of Commons of a very weak minority, when Ireland was in a state of acute disorder, and the Executive had no special powers by which to preserve the authority of the law—if at that time the Tory Government told Parliament and the country that a Local Government Bill for Ireland was in course of preparation and was being considered by the Ministers of the Crown; if in August 1886 the Tory Government—again in a minority, not possessing a majority of the House of Commons, not possessing special powers for the enforcement of the law, and Ireland still being in a state of disorder—came before Parliament and solemnly pledged itself to extend to Ireland some measure of local government: I say, if that is so, then, when the Government occupies a very much more advantageous position for preserving the tranquillity and for developing the prosperity of Ireland, *a fortiori* we can pursue confidently the policy of extending to Ireland similar and equal treatment with that we give England and Scotland. You can imagine I have reasons for bringing this most vital question to your notice. Before passing to that I wish to allude for a moment to an argument which was brought forward with great effect in the House of Commons against my views, and I do not like to pass it by without notice. I will call it the ‘scandals’ argument. The persons who use this argument say, ‘Oh, you cannot give an extension of local government to Ireland such as you are giving to England, because the Irish boards and the Irish public bodies which already exist mismanage their affairs and are guilty of such shocking administrative scandals.’ That reminds me of another argument which was brought forward some time ago against extending the franchise in Ireland, and that is the argument which I used to call the ‘mud-cabin’ argument. In England then it was said by many, ‘You must not give the Irish people the Parliamentary franchise as you give it to England, they will misuse it. They are sure to misuse it. They cannot help misusing it.’ And why? ‘Because they live in mud



cabins.' But we had to point to the fact that, whereas Irish peasants lived in mud cabins, there were undoubtedly many classes of voters in England living in dwellings that were no better than mud cabins, and that if you were going to make the dwelling of the voter the criterion of his capacity to vote you would have to disfranchise not only large numbers of the Irish but large numbers of English people too. Well, the 'mud-cabin argument disappeared, and I should like to point out that the 'scandals' argument against the extension of local government in Ireland is of a very similar character. It is a very double-edged argument if you say, 'We cannot give any local government to Ireland because of the scandals connected with popular boards in Ireland.' In the first place, if your argument is worth anything, you ought to take away what little local government they possess already. But it is a very double-edged argument. Are there no scandals attaching to the administration of local affairs in this country? I take you to the great metropolis—we may call it the greatest metropolis in the world—I take you to London. The other day we were told that one of the vestries, one of the boards of guardians in county Galway, had indulged in the pleasurable emotion of a free fight among its members. But the gentlemen who used that argument could hardly have been aware that scarcely a month passes without a vestry in London either positively indulging in a free fight or coming to the very verge of a free fight, and that never does a month pass without one or more vestries in London giving themselves the amusement of seeing in connection with the administration of their affairs that which the adjectives 'outrageous' and 'scandalous' would be perfectly inadequate to describe. I am glad to notice the scandals connected with these local bodies in the metropolis, and, being a metropolitan member, I like to draw public attention to them in the hope of putting an end to them. I invite your attention to another great public board in this country—the Metropolitan Board of Works. There is a Board dealing with millions of money annually, a Board supposed to be representative, a Board supposed to be composed of the respectable classes, of classes who have a stake in the country, and who have got something to lose.

What has happened to that Board? The allegations against that Board of corruption and jobbery were so serious, and, what is more, were *prima facie* so well founded, that the Government passed a law to constitute a Royal Commission with almost unprecedented and unparalleled powers to investigate the proceedings of the Metropolitan Board. I refer you to a great body of historic importance and of ancient renown. I refer you to the Corporation of the City of London. You will recollect that last year that Corporation was literally hauled before a committee of the House of Commons and accused of the grossest malversation of public funds, and not even the warmest friends of the Corporation will assert that it left the Court without a stain upon its character. Well, do her Majesty's Government propose, because of these scandals connected with local governing boards, to refuse popular and representative local government to London? On the contrary, they have brought in a Bill which will establish in London a municipal government of a far more popular and representative character. Are they deterred from doing that by seeing that the people of London do not condemn these scandals and tolerate them? The people of London have tolerated these scandals for years, and it is notorious that the government of the metropolis has been in the hands of persons who have been most inefficient and possibly corrupt. And yet does that deter the Government from giving popular municipal government to the metropolis? The argument will not hold water for a moment. We have had riots in London just as we had in Ireland, and we had the West-end half sacked eighteen months or two years ago by a mob that paraded through the streets and destroyed and stole a great deal of valuable property. We have had the most serious riots between the police and the people in Trafalgar Square. Has that deterred the Government from extending popular government to the metropolis? No. Why? If things of this kind, scandals, riots and disorder, do not deter us in London, why should they deter us in regard to the case of Ireland? Depend upon it, scandals will always occur from time to time in popular representative assemblies. Scandals of the gravest kind have occurred even in our own House of Commons. But the progress of an enlightened public

opinion tends to correct and remove those scandals, and it is because we regard popular institutions in Ireland as the great cure and remedy for much of the disorder and trouble which has distracted that country that we bound ourselves at the last election to extend popular institutions in Ireland.

All these arguments were in my mind when I made a speech in the House of Commons just three weeks ago, which caused a good deal of comment, and I fear some comment of an unfavourable character. When I made that speech on Irish Local Government there was great indignation among certain persons, and there was some very bad language, I am afraid, used against me. I fancy I was very generally called in the lobby of the House of Commons a traitor to the Union and the Unionist party. Others who were more charitable said, 'He is such an unreliable person. You never know what he is going to do next.' There were other persons who were not quite so charitable, and they said, 'You need not pay any attention to it, for it is caused by the mean motives of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.' That was stated and hinted at in the press and in political circles in London. I am glad to think, from the kind way in which you have received me to-night and from an article which I saw in a newspaper which may claim to represent very closely the opinions of Preston people, I am glad to think that such opinions as those I have alluded to do not find any currency in this great town. But I am not the least alarmed at the circulation or the growth of accusations of that character. I am so accustomed to them. I have constantly been the unfortunate victim of these outbursts of sudden indignation. Many times it has happened to me in my Parliamentary experience for persons to come up to me and say, 'Well, my dear fellow, I am really very sorry, but you have done for yourself this time.' I was told the other day that a noble lord of position wrote to a friend of mine and said, 'It is a thousand pities, but this time Randolph has cut his throat.' Why this fearful outburst? What had I done? I had only insisted, as I shall always insist, on a literal performance of pledges given by the Unionist party to the people of this country. But, as I said, I am not in the least alarmed. These tempests arise very

suddenly like tropical storms, and then pass away, and, although I have often done for myself and cut my throat time after time, I find, on the whole, I get along fairly well, and certainly what passes this evening in this hall does not encourage me to think that I am in any way politically dead. I will tell you why I am not alarmed, because I find that her Majesty's Government—and I give them credit for it—are ploughing with my oxen. I find that the Dartford programme is being steadily but unmistakably carried out. That is why the Government and I can get along so admirably together, with the exception of an occasional turn up now and then. What was the feature of the Dartford programme—a programme which people said was my programme but was not my programme—it was the programme of the Government? The feature was English measures first, Irish measures next. What were the English measures alluded to in that programme? The allotments question, the tithes question, the question of land law reform, railway rates, and last, but not least, the question of local government in the counties; and with those English measures there has been made progress. What were the Irish measures? The questions of land, local government, and education. What was the main principle of that programme? The main principle was that the same measure of generous, confident trust and liberality of treatment should be meted out in legislating for the people of both countries. What was the main object of that programme? That the representatives of the English and the Irish peoples in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster should generously and equitably legislate for the people of the United Kingdom, and thus demonstrate the inexpediency of setting up a separate Parliament in each country of the United Kingdom. I have supported the Government all along in carrying out that programme, and the only time when I sound a note of warning and alarm—and I shall continue to sound a note of warning and alarm—is when I see a sign or an indication or a tendency of that great programme being departed from.

The line of demarcation between the Unionist party, and the Repeal party which is led by Mr. Gladstone, is sharp, definite, and unmistakable. Nothing has changed. It is now as it

was at the election of 1886. Mr. Gladstone's method of dealing with Ireland was to build up local government from the top by constructing a practically independent Parliament in Ireland, which should be allowed to establish what local institutions it might please. That was Mr. Gladstone's method. What is our method? The Unionist method was diametrically the reverse. It was to build up local government from the bottom on sound and sure foundations. It was to establish local institutions under the guidance and under the protection of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, and it was to educate and to train the Irish people by degrees in the art of self-government, which, partly from their own fault and partly from our fault, they had so long neglected. I know there are people who say, 'The Irish are not fit for the institutions which we English can enjoy; they would make a bad use of them.' I came across the other day a passage from Lord Macaulay which I should like to read to persons who may hold that opinion. Lord Macaulay's writings are the favourite arsenal for the defenders of the Union to have recourse to, and certainly no one has written more strongly in defence of the Union between Ireland and England. What did Lord Macaulay—perhaps the greatest Whig thinker and writer that this country has ever seen—say with regard to the argument that certain people were not fit to possess free institutions until they asked for them? Let me read you the passage. It is out of his essay on Milton, which I dare say many of you have read. He says: 'Many politicians of our own time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water until he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.' No, gentlemen, we must not make mistakes in this matter. We are prosperous now; we are powerful now; but we must always have our eye on the future, and we must always be guarding against misfortune and danger in the future. The foundation of the Act of Union was not separate Parliaments nor diverse laws for the two countries. The foundation of the Act of Union was one Parliament and

equal laws for the two countries, and to that solemn national compact the two peoples of Britain and Ireland are reciprocally and solemnly pledged. I have never held, and I have never been willing to admit for one moment, that the existence of the Crimes Act in Ireland implies any inequality of treatment. On the contrary, I always said that, if similar circumstances existed in England to those which necessitated the passing of the Crimes Act in Ireland, it would be the duty of any English Government to propose similar measures. I know perfectly well, and I am not surprised, that there are some in this country, perhaps many, to whom the operation of the Crimes Act in Ireland appears harsh and severe, and who think that the Irish people are being oppressed. In considering this subject we may draw a useful analogy from the science of medicine and of healing disease. There are many forms of disease for which the only cure is the surgeon's knife. The surgeon's knife cuts boldly, and you would think ruthlessly, into the patient's body, extirpating and removing all the putrefied and diseased portions of the body, and the patient himself by his cries of agony would lead you to think that he was being maltreated and butchered and even killed. But you look on sympathetically but unmoved, because you know the remedy is scientific and that a real cure is being established. So with the Crimes Act in Ireland. The Act cuts boldly and ruthlessly into the diseased Irish body; it removes from the diseased Irish society all that malignant and cancerous tumour of intimidation, and terror, and illegal combination which was sapping the Irish vitality and destroying the Irish strength. That is the effect of the Crimes Act in Ireland. We may pursue that analogy even further, and just as in the treatment of disease, after the surgeon has used his knife with effect, there comes the physician with his gentle healing remedies, with his stimulants, and with his tonics to restore nature and to aid the process of revival, so I feel sanguine, no matter what anybody may say in the House of Commons or out of it, that the Unionist party next year will apply to Ireland a policy of generous concession and conciliation; that they will inaugurate an era of liberal legislation for the satisfaction of Irish grievances and of Irish wants; that by such

a policy they will mitigate and obliterate the apparent harshness and severity of the Crimes Act ; that by such a policy they will justify and ratify the courage and enlightened wisdom of the Head of the Church of Rome ; and that by such a policy, before no long time is over, they will demonstrate beyond all denial, beyond the reach of all carping and captious criticism, that the Irish and the British are one people, one in interest, one in progress, one in Imperial dominion, one in the possession of all those traditions and aspirations which make peoples and nations great and free.

I turn to another matter of vital importance—the question of public expenditure—and I regret to announce to you that I see very little progress as yet being made with any reform of the public expenditure. The subject of economy and of administrative reform is still, I deeply lament to say, almost untouched. The majority of the members of Parliament up to the present appear to be somewhat callous and apathetic regarding public expenditure. Some members, I think, are not only forgetful of the speeches they made to their constituents, but are forgetful of the duties they owe to the taxpayer. There are a few gentlemen like Mr. Hanbury, whom I see on this platform, and Mr. Jennings, of Stockport, and others—a remnant who have not bowed the knee to Baal—and they labour hard and long ; but not only do they incur a great deal of abuse and dislike by their labours with regard to this most necessary reform, but they are also, I think, from time to time impressed like me by the despairing nature of the struggle. There seems to be a kind of determination, an invincible resolution, on the part of the majority of the House of Commons to permit or to support the reckless expenditure of money. I should like to bring a few facts before you to illustrate that position. There is a tendency, a most dangerous tendency, at the present moment, a precedent for which I do not recollect—a tendency to create new offices. I am quite certain of this, that if any of you went into the House of Commons and saw some thirty-eight ministers—I think about thirty-six or thirty-eight ministers—seated on the front bench in the House of Commons, and then went into the House of Lords and saw a dozen more ministers seated on the front

bench in the House of Lords, you would say, considering the very amateur manner in which this country is governed, you would say, I think, 'We have quite enough of Ministers.' There is the new office of Under Secretary for Ireland which it is proposed to create, and which has excited my attention in a different manner to that which it has excited in Parliament. I quite understand, and am prepared to admit, that the Irish Secretary is a very hard-worked man and requires assistance. I quite understand that; and I have not a word to say against it; but, to give him that assistance, I object to the creation of a new Minister; because you can give that assistance without creating a new office. There are representing the Treasury in the House of Commons the First Lord of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, two Secretaries and three Lords of the Treasury. The First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are Cabinet Ministers and have some hard work. The Parliamentary Secretary of the Treasury is one of the hardest-worked men in the Government. The Patronage Secretary of the Treasury has merely party duties to perform; but the three Lords of the Treasury, who each receive 1,000*l.* a year, have absolutely no official duties of any sort or kind. They are engaged in the work of what is called whipping up the Ministerial majority. That is an important work, no doubt; but I think it is a fair question whether the charge for that work should come upon the public funds. But do they do it alone? On the contrary, to assist them in that arduous duty they have the assistance of four Court officials, who between them receive 4,000*l.* a year. These are the Comptroller of the Household, the Vice-Chamberlain, the Parliamentary Groom-in-Waiting, and the Treasurer of the Household; and the four Court officials and three Lords of the Treasury and the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury are all engaged in the work of whipping up the Ministerial majority. And what do you reckon that work costs us? Eight thousand a year; and this is spent in whipping up a Ministerial majority. I say this, that if the Irish Secretary wants Ministerial assistance—and I quite conceive he might do so—his duty is to single out one of the Lords of the Treasury and make that gentleman work for the large salary



which he receives. You have often heard it said that honesty is the best policy. I will prove to you that economy is the best policy. Suppose that Government had taken that course, and suppose they had appointed Colonel King-Harman—who is a very good man and not justly open to the abuse which the Irish very improperly and ungenerously heap upon him—suppose they had appointed him a Lord of the Treasury, what would have happened? He would have been re-elected; he would have received his office, he would have assisted the Irish Secretary, and there would not have been one single moment of the time of the House of Commons taken up in making that appointment. Instead of which you have had hours, days, and nights taken up in discussing a Bill to create a new office, and I do not hesitate to say before this meeting, whether it may be pleasing or not to some persons in London, that the discussion of that appointment, the opposition to the appointment, has been by no means an unjustifiable opposition.

It is proposed to create a Minister of Agriculture. I know that agricultural representatives think that the progress of agriculture will be forwarded by the creation of a Minister of Agriculture. How they may have got that idea into their heads I cannot imagine. But I have no objection to the Government creating this office if they will do away with the office of Lord President of the Council and the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Both those offices are absolutely sinecure posts, and I decline to sanction the creation of a Minister of Agriculture, receiving a salary, when the work of that office can be done by existing ministers if they like to do it. But it is not only proposed to create a Minister of Agriculture, but to add a new judge to the bench at a salary of 5,000*l.* a year, to be paid out of the Consolidated Fund, a fund beyond the control of Parliament, and the salary removed from the control of Parliament. Again, it will be perfectly easy to prove to the House of Commons that the creation of that new judge is totally unnecessary, that if the common law judges like to work harder, as they ought to do, considering the great salaries they receive, the arrears which have accumulated in the Court of Chancery might be easily disposed of, and if the Government were a Government

bent on economy they would not listen to the proposal to create a new judge. But we are threatened with the proposal. I hope I have knocked that new judge on the head. But I am not quite sure of it, and I call public attention to the scandal—the positive scandal—of creating a new judge for an already overcrowded bench. But I cannot leave this question of the judicial bench without bringing to your notice the state of the Irish judicial bench, the misdeeds of the Government with respect to that bench. When I was at the Treasury, and when my predecessor was at the Treasury, we were perfectly determined, under no circumstances whatever, to tolerate any addition to the Irish bench. We were determined to cut down the Irish bench. It is notoriously overmanned for the comparatively few duties it has to perform as compared with its strength. But I am sorry to say that after I left the Treasury two vacancies occurred on the Irish bench. The common law judges, who numbered ten, were reduced to eight, a number in excess of what is absolutely necessary for the discharge of the judicial business in Ireland. I made sure that the Government would not consent to fill up those two appointments. Unfortunately, the mischievous genius of Dublin Castle was too strong. They secured the appointments for themselves; and the public scandal—what amounts to nothing more or less than a public scandal—was witnessed of the Irish bench being kept up to the strength of ten common law judges when, by the confession of all, it was ludicrously in excess of the duties which the Irish bench had to perform. What does that mean? It means a charge of at least between 7,000*l.* and 8,000*l.* a year on the Consolidated Fund. It means that we have appointed two gentlemen to do duties which it was not at all necessary they should be appointed to do, and after fifteen years these two gentlemen will be able to retire on pensions of 3,000*l.* a year. I say these are public scandals, and must be brought before public meetings. I say that with regard to these new appointments a large unnecessary burden is placed upon the taxpayers, and that unless the public take notice of these matters and bring pressure to bear upon Parliament the taxpayer will not receive from Parliament and from the Government that relief to which he is entitled.

I come to another and more serious question, which I can only deal with in a few brief remarks—the expenditure on the Army and Navy. I ask you to consider in relation to that expenditure the revelations which we have had as to the condition of the two services. I brought to the public notice the other day as well as I could the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief that the whole condition of the Army was never more unsatisfactory, and that he was most dissatisfied with it. Lord Wolseley—who is, next to the Commander-in-Chief, one of the most important persons in the Army, whom I had the disappointment of seeing execute a strategic but at the same time a rapid and rather disorderly movement to the rear, under cover of that retreat, shot a Parthian arrow at the Government, and this was what Lord Wolseley said. Let me draw your attention to his words: ‘That so long as the Navy is as weak as it is at this moment, her Majesty’s Army cannot hold its own all over the world, dispersed as it is; that our defences at home and abroad at the present time are in an unsatisfactory condition; and that our military forces are not organised or equipped as they should be to guarantee even the safety of the capital in which we are at this present moment.’ The Roman Senate, when a Roman general came home, having lost a Roman army, addressed its general and said, ‘Varus, what have you done with our legions?’ I say to the great English general, I say to my Lord Wolseley, ‘What have you done with our millions?’ Because for the last ten years or more there has been a gross expenditure on the Army and Navy considerably exceeding 30,000,000*l.* a year; and I own that I am exasperated, and I think the public ought to be exasperated too, when, in view of that great expenditure, generals representing the War Office come before you and state to you on their responsibility that you, the British public, who have paid so much, are in an absolutely defenceless position. That is rather too strong an order. It shows that there is something very wrong somewhere which must be very rapidly remedied. Lord Wolseley, you observe, condemns the weakness of the British Navy. You may recollect what Mr. Cobden said more than once publicly as to the necessity for a strong British Navy to the safety of the

empire. Lord Wolseley condemns in the House of Lords the weakness of the British Navy, and the Prime Minister does not seem at all to realise the nature of the charge, because he says, 'How can you talk of the weakness of the British Navy? Why, for the last three years we have spent five millions a year as an extra charge for the purpose of strengthening the Navy, whereas in 1880 we only spent two millions.' But that has nothing whatever to do with the question. The question is that you have wasted your five millions a year as you have probably before wasted your two millions. I can prove, and I have proved—in my speech at Wolverhampton last year which never was contradicted—that the enormous portion of the vote of credit taken in 1885 to increase the Navy was wasted. The Admiralty built ships which they said were armoured ships. When the ships were launched and went to sea, it was found that the whole of their armour was under water and useless. They took millions to build what they called protected ships. When those ships went to sea they were absolutely unprotected; and yet they are gravely put down by the Admiralty in their list of armoured vessels, and the expenditure on them is quoted by Lord Salisbury to show the strength of the Navy! But further: we have this shocking spectacle, that many of your ships, on which this great expenditure of which the Prime Minister is so proud has been laid out, cannot go to sea for want of guns—that they are waiting for guns, and will have to wait for guns for some time. More than that: it has been stated publicly, and never denied, that our fortresses at home from Portland to the Tweed have no heavy guns for their defence. More than that: we have been told that our Mediterranean fortresses have no heavy guns for their defence, and the First Lord of the Treasury announced to an astonished House of Commons last night that he hoped, by the new measure which he had introduced, that possibly in three years the Mediterranean fortresses might be provided with heavy guns. Not only that: the Army, in spite of this tremendous expenditure of twenty millions a year upon it, is admitted not to be armed with a good rifle. It is admitted to be armed with an inferior and an obsolete weapon. We have no reserves, either of gunpowder or of military stores. We have

no transport whatever for the Army except a kind of scrappy and ragged transport for the First Army Corps of 25,000 men. But the Second Army Corps and the whole of the reserve forces necessary for the defence of the country are without transport of any sort or kind. More than that: speaking generally, we have no organisation under the present system for a time of war. If war was to break out to-morrow there would be most terrible and probably fatal chaos and confusion at the Admiralty and War Offices—departments to which the British people have entrusted scores of millions by the year. Have I not the right when I talk upon these subjects to be exasperated, and have I not the right to call upon the British people to be exasperated too, and to exercise their great and invincible energy, to find out where that fault lies and to remedy that fault without delay?

I know perfectly well there are people in London who will say when they read these words to-morrow, ‘How can he have the face to make such remarks? Why, he resigned because he wished to cut down the estimates.’ I did not resign at all because I wished to cut down the estimates. I resigned as a great protest—the strongest protest that I could make—against waste and extravagance. I knew, and nobody will deny that subsequent disclosures have borne out, that waste and extravagance were going on to an incredible degree, and I called upon them to reduce that waste and extravagance. The departments said that they could not, and the departments got the best of me; but which has the best of it now? The view I took at that time has been borne out by two of the highest authorities. The Secretary of State for War, in a speech the other day, said, ‘It is not so much the money is wanted as a good system of organisation.’ Well, that is exactly what I said when I went out. Lord Charles Beresford, writing the other day to a gentleman, said, ‘If we had a good system of organisation the present estimates would be sufficient, nay, more than sufficient, to maintain that organisation.’ I have never changed from this position regarding the expenditure on the Army and the Navy; and I may really call in my defence the Prime Minister of this country, because the Prime Minister said the other day in the House of Lords—and I do not think he would

say more in my praise than he could possibly help—that he did not believe there was a single public man in this country against whom the accusation could by any possibility be made that he would risk the safety of the empire on the chance of a popular Budget. I believe I am the only public man against whom that charge has been recently brought, and so I take Lord Salisbury's observation and carefully apply it to myself.

I have never changed from this position. What I stated to the departments, and what I have stated over and over again to Parliament and the people, is this—Prove to me that money is wanted for the safety of the empire. More than that: prove to me that that money will be well spent; prove to me that the nation will get a full and adequate return for that expenditure; prove to me that you have got a rational system of organisation which should secure that for every sovereign you take out of the taxpayers' pockets a sovereign's benefit shall result; prove that to me, and there is no demand which I would not cheerfully suggest or become responsible for in Parliament or on the platform. Any demand for the safety of the empire or the efficiency of the forces I would gladly support. But these securities for the proper expenditure of the money granted, so far as I am concerned, I will have; and I will not vote money if I can help it, to be expended under the present system—a system which has been convicted before Parliament and before the people of being utterly rotten and bad; a system under which, for every sovereign of money spent, the people do not get even half-a-crown's worth of benefit. This matter is coming to a crisis. I am happy to say it has for a year or more been coming to a crisis; but it has come to such a crisis in Parliament that the Government are pledged to consider the matter practically and immediately with a view to radical reform. I trust that that pledge will be redeemed. I watch and I wait with great patience, but not, I fear, with very great hope. I cannot exaggerate—no one can exaggerate; it is not in the power of anybody to overstate to you, representing as you do so directly the wealth and commerce of England—the importance of this matter. Look at the present state of Europe. Everybody admits that it is volcanic. I know that there are some in this country—

and for aught I know there may be many—who are in favour of what they call a spirited foreign policy. I am not much in favour of a spirited foreign policy, because I have always thought it meant we should receive a great many more kicks than halfpence. I can understand, however, that there is something to be said for a spirited foreign policy when you have behind it the means and the material force to give effect to it if necessary; but to pursue a spirited foreign policy in our present military and naval condition does not appear to me to be wise or safe. I have no doubt that David pursued a spirited foreign policy when he went out against Goliath with a sling and a stone, but I think that the narrative shows that there was a supernatural force exerted on his side on that occasion which we, as prudent, practical people, should hardly be justified in counting on in our own case; and I do not hesitate to say before this meeting that a spirited foreign policy, in our present military and naval condition, would be a policy for which I should be sorry to become in any way responsible. I feel that I have trespassed upon you long. I apologise to you for the length of my remarks, and I thank you for your great patience. All I would venture to express to you, in conclusion, is, that you should allow these remarks of mine not only this evening, but from time to time in the course of the next few weeks, to occupy your mind and attract your consideration: I trust that they will influence you towards the more effectual formation of a sound, healthy, and strong public opinion which shall guide the Unionist party in a safe course of government, and aid them to carry out and perform their great task and high duty of promoting and consolidating the unity of the United Kingdom and of maintaining and extending the strength of the British Empire.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS AT THE  
CLOSE OF 1888.

PADDINGTON, NOVEMBER 17, 1888.

[It will be seen that in this speech, which is necessarily abridged, Lord Randolph Churchill strongly supported the Government in the general lines of its policy, as he had supported it in many other speeches delivered after his resignation. He was immediately informed by a Ministerial journal that it was useless for him to make these 'civil speeches'—he 'was no longer wanted in the Ministerial galley.' At the same time it was continually represented that he was making war on the Ministry. Much confusion of fact was frequently to be observed, in officially 'inspired' journals, throughout this controversy.]

IT is a fact, a very remarkable one, and possibly almost a unique one in modern history, that the foreign policy which has been pursued by the Government of Lord Salisbury has commanded not only the general but the unstinted approval of the entire nation; and when we consider the state of Europe—how anxious is that state—I think we must feel that the course of foreign policy which at such a time commands the unanimous approval of the nation is a course of foreign policy which is distinctly creditable to the Government which carries it out; therefore it is unnecessary for me to examine foreign affairs with any minuteness to-night. If foreign affairs be well conducted the best thing is to let them alone; but there is one point in connection with foreign affairs about which I would, with your permission, address to you some observations to which I attach serious importance. I allude, gentlemen, to our relations with the United States of America. With regard to our relations with the United States of America, there are



three questions pending—questions which are perhaps awkward questions now, and which may become more awkward still. I allude to the question connected with the fisheries; I allude to the question connected with certain boundaries of territory; and I allude to the question of negotiating a treaty for extradition of criminals. I think you will agree with me if I attach enormous importance, in the negotiation of these questions, to the maintenance of an attitude towards America of the most imperturbable and most friendly good-humour. No doubt the Americans are very good hands at driving a hard bargain. They perhaps a little resemble the Dutch of the last century, who were said to be distinguished for giving too little and for asking too much. No doubt they like, if they can, to get six to four the best of their opponents; but I do not know why we should blame them on that account. We should try to the best of our ability to uphold our own rights, and we can with advantage remember—that the Americans are essentially a just people, and that although the Americans are a proud people, and that though they have a right to be a proud people, they are by no means a quarrelsome or an excitable people, and therefore they are a people with whom it is not difficult to remain on excellent terms. But it cannot be denied that certain incidents have recently taken place which have to some extent strained the relations between the two countries. I allude to the action of President Cleveland after the rejection by the Senate of the treaty which Mr. Chamberlain had negotiated. I also allude to the action of President Cleveland in dismissing our Minister from Washington the other day.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that these incidents have somewhat strained the relations between the two countries; but I think we ought to make the utmost allowance for the position in which the Americans were placed. I think if you search the modern history of England you will find that even our own Governments

<sup>1</sup> Lord Sackville had written a most imprudent letter in the very height of the excitement attending the Presidential election; the letter had given great offence, and injured the prospects of the Democratic party; and in consequence of all this, Lord Sackville was practically dismissed by the Government of the United States. Unusual delay occurred in sending out his successor, and to this delay Lord Randolph was referring in the above passage.

at times have pursued a policy with respect to foreign affairs when general elections were pending which they would not have pursued if general elections had not been pending. With respect to the dismissal of the British Minister at Washington, we must, as fair and impartial persons, recognise that in the matter we were primarily wrong. There is no doubt that our Minister at Washington had committed a most unfortunate indiscretion and a most unfortunate blunder; and I do not hesitate to say it seems to me that the blunder was without excuse, when we recollect that Lord Sackville was a gentleman who had had long experience of the nature of political strife in America. No doubt we may have wished that President Cleveland had acted in these circumstances in a manner less prompt and less brusque. But still, looking at it fairly and with the desire to put the best construction we can upon American action, I think, with regard to the treatment of our Minister, we are hardly entitled, nor would it be prudent on our part, to exhibit any great anger or vexation. I dwell particularly on this point because I think that the future contains matter for anxiety. I have observed with grief a series of articles which have recently appeared in one of the London morning papers which breathe the spirit of insult and menace to the United States, and which appear to me to be inspired by nothing else but mere bluster and braggadocio. Gentlemen, the prospect of war between England and the United States of America—the prospect of any serious quarrel between England and the United States of America—is, to my mind, the most appalling prospect which I can picture. I utterly refuse to consider it possible for a moment. A war between England and the United States of America would be more atrocious in its character, more utterly disastrous and destructive to the interests of civilisation, than any war which has ever been waged since war began upon this earth. And I feel sure if the readers of the articles to which I allude had any conception whatever, any decent realisation of the unspeakable mischief which sentiments such as they produce might cause in America, they would rather smash up their pens and tear up their paper than write one line or one word of the articles to which I have referred. But, gentlemen, there is another policy,

which I see a tendency to advocate in certain quarters, which appears to me to fall not far short of the mischief of the former policy, and that is the policy which, without intending offence, I will designate as the policy of sneers and sulks. Nothing, I think, would be more foolish or childish on our part than to pursue such a policy. Nothing would be more unworthy of the might and the power of the British Empire than to indulge in a policy of sneers and sulks when dealing with equals. What I would impress upon this meeting and upon the public is, the importance of demonstrating to our American brothers as early and as practically as we can, with regard to recent incidents which have occurred, that no bad feelings of any sort exist in our minds with regard to them. It is for that purpose I express a hope that the post of British Minister at Washington may not be left vacant for long. I do not think that any longer delay ought to elapse in filling up the post than may be necessary for the selection of a gentleman of ability and experience who will be acceptable to the American people.

I have a special as well as a general reason for urging this, and it is, that the fisheries question, as any one who is acquainted with it will agree, from its very nature, may at any moment become most acute, and the most serious issues—issues most vital to the future fortunes of the two nations—may absolutely depend upon the presence at, or the absence from, Washington of an experienced British diplomatist. We must not pay much attention to the loud and quarrelsome and disagreeable tone which is assumed towards us by a portion of the American press which is inspired by, or written to please, the Irish vote. I have spoken on this question because I attach great importance to it, and also because I hope I may be allowed to say I know something of America. I have twice visited that country; I have travelled somewhat in that country; and I have had the pleasure of meeting Americans of various positions—gentlemen well qualified to represent the opinion of America—and to speak with authority as regards that opinion. I have often been assured, I may say generally been assured, by Americans of the prevalence throughout the whole length and breadth of America of feelings most cordial towards this country—feelings of admira-

tion, almost of affection, towards the mother-country. It has often been stated to me by Americans of the character such as I have described that if ever this country was involved in a struggle for its existence, there would arise in America from north to south and from east to west a strong, a predominant, possibly an overwhelming feeling that the whole force and might of the United States should be cast upon the side of the mother-country. Whether that statement be true or not, whether it be fanciful or exaggerated, or whether it be a real sentiment, I cannot with any real certainty pronounce; but it is right and pleasing to acknowledge that is a sentiment which may well be true, and it is right and prudent we should so act as if that sentiment were true. I most earnestly hope and advocate that with regard to the few outstanding disputes, and in all our relations with the new Government at Washington, our policy may be so directed by our Ministers that in the questions, by no means remote, the solution of which may trouble, perplex, and possibly destroy some European nations, we may find in the people of the United States of America our best and our surest allies; and that a strong and indestructible friendship between the English-speaking communities on the east and the west of the Atlantic may preserve and guarantee to humanity the twin blessings of liberty and of peace.

I content myself with a general allusion to the question of Ireland. What was the condition of affairs when the Unionist party succeeded to power? Ireland was in a state of utter anarchy—anarchy which was not only distinctly discreditable to the reputation of this country, but dangerous to the interests of the empire. It was the direct interest of the Repeal party to perpetuate and to increase that state of anarchy. It was equally vital to the Unionist Government to put an end, and a speedy end, to it. It is a very old proverb that those who play at bowls must expect rubbers; and those who directly participate in what I decline to call political agitation, but what is nothing more nor less than civic tumult, must not be surprised if in gratifying their wish, if in indulging themselves in that luxury, they suffer in their person and in their liberty—perhaps, a little more now and then than they themselves may think

absolutely right. To those Repealers and Nationalists who complain so bitterly, and, as far as I can see, so inaccurately, as to the administration of the criminal law in Ireland, who raise these frantic outcries about the brutality of the Irish Government and the arbitrary interference with every kind of personal freedom, which they assert to be the characteristic of the Irish Government, I have only this to say : that if here and there—and I by no means admit it is the case—but if here and there there has been some rough-and-ready administration of justice, if here and there some individual directly concerned in illegal agitation has got a little more than his deserts, the responsibility for such injustice, if injustice there be, lies upon those, and upon those alone, who create disturbance, who maintain disturbance, and who seek to attain political ends and political power by the overthrow of all the foundations of society and by the total destruction of all order, liberty, and law. At the same time, we must be on our guard against certain proclivities and certain dangers which attach to coercion, and we must be careful not to look for the regeneration of Ireland solely to the administration of the criminal law. It is for that reason I am glad that the Government has decided to appeal to Parliament, even at this late period of the session, for further provision for the facilitation of the purchase of land in Ireland by the occupier.<sup>1</sup> That and other measures ought to demand our attention both on grounds of policy and grounds of good faith towards the electorate. We ought to consider it our duty to endeavour as far as possible to construct in Ireland institutions which are sound and healthy, as well as to extirpate institutions and customs which are noxious and diseased. And strong, irresistibly strong, will be the position of the Unionist party at the next general election if they can demonstrate, not only by argument but by fact, that they found Ireland a wilderness, and that they have transformed it into an orderly, a fertile—ay, possibly, even a smiling field. But for this purpose no one recognises more clearly than I do that time is necessary, and a good allowance of time ; and it is for that reason I protest most strongly against the

<sup>1</sup> An extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act, proposed and carried in the autumn session.

denunciations which Mr. Gladstone has recently indulged in of what is known as the Septennial Act, which assures to the present Parliament ample time for the fruition of its policy in Ireland. It is quite impossible that Mr. Gladstone can object to the Septennial Act on constitutional grounds. I look upon that as almost impossible, because Mr. Gladstone has proposed two Reform Bills in the House of Commons and had the moulding of another Reform Bill ; and neither in 1866 nor in 1867 nor in 1884 did Mr. Gladstone propose to repeal or modify the Septennial Act. Not an expression came from his lips which would lead us to suppose that he had the smallest objection to the operation of that Act. But the case is very different now. He said, I think, in so many words, at Birmingham, that what is known as the Septennial Act operated evilly for his party. Well, of course, I suppose he ought to be the best judge of what is good or bad for his party ; but, as a perfectly disinterested looker-on, I take leave to express my entire disagreement with him on that point. I think you will agree that the longer the time, the more ample the period which is given to the party which follows Mr. Gladstone to reflect upon the folly and the danger of the policy of Repeal, the better it will ultimately be for them. No doubt it sounds very brave and very courageous on the part of Mr. Gladstone to profess his anxiety to appeal to the judgment of the people, and to taunt the Government with their reluctance so to appeal, and to taunt the Government with their fears of a dissolution. That is all very brave and very courageous. It reminds me of a man who said he was the bravest man in the world, and if anybody doubted his assertion he would say to that person—‘ Do you doubt me ? Well, now, look ! come with me to the top of that monument, and let us jump together from the top to the bottom ! ’ That was valour of a very splendid and startling character, but it does not seem to me to have been valour of a very practical character, and it resembles very much the kind of valour Mr. Gladstone displays when he challenges the Government to dissolve this Parliament.

I most earnestly hope that the present Parliament has before it at least three whole years. I earnestly hope that these three years will be years of active life and of useful, honest

labour; and I trust that nothing will induce the present Government, or the loyal majority which supports them, to lay down their burden of work and duty until they feel in their consciences that the task and the trust which the people devolved upon them and reposed in them has been amply, honourably, and adequately fulfilled. I feel I am making rather a large demand upon your patience; but may I, before I conclude, indicate very cursorily what I think, with all respect and deference to those whose political knowledge and political experience is greater than my own, is the direction which the future labours of this Parliament should take? I put first and foremost—and I fear you really will think me rather like Mr. Dick in Dickens's novel, who never could keep the head of Charles I. out of his memorial—administrative reform. I think you must see, if you have studied recent Parliamentary discussions, that the need for administrative reforms is obvious and is urgent. We had only the other night a discussion in the House of Commons, raised by my friend the member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings), which brought out very clearly and in a very striking manner the extravagance, the useless bulk and clumsiness and overgrowth, of our Civil Service. I made some remarks on the subject, and 'The Times' next day rebuked me for using strong language. I think a rebuke for using strong language comes rather curiously from 'The Times,' because, if I may make what amounts to an Irish bull, 'The Times' has a weakness for strong language. And the proof of that weakness is that it has led to the appointment of a Commission of Judges which is now sitting, and which may be sitting for a very long time, to ascertain whether the strong language of 'The Times' was justified or not; but 'The Times,' I expect, resembles myself in this particular, although probably its pride will be insulted by the assimilation, that when it feels strongly it speaks strongly. There is no subject on which I feel more strongly than this subject of administrative reform, and I shall continue to speak strongly on it as long as I have the honour to represent you in Parliament. I was also rebuked by the Attorney-General in a very solemn manner because I said I was anxious to excite the imagination of the people. I am anxious to excite the imagination of the

people, and I will tell you why. Because these abuses are so deep-rooted, and the persons who are interested in the maintenance of these abuses are so numerous and so strong, that unless you excite public imagination you cannot get, and you cannot hope to get, motive power which will enable you to sweep away these abuses and to introduce reform. There is no economy possible in your Civil Service expenditure without a large reform taking the direction of simplification of the Civil Service of this country. Closely allied with that is the condition of the Army and Navy. That is a subject which excites great interest, and a great deal has been written, and very powerfully written, to show that the condition of the Army and Navy is by no means such as the taxpayers of this country have a right to expect. We are told there will be large demands made by the Government next year upon the liberality and upon the patriotism of the House of Commons in respect of the Army and the Navy. All I have to say upon that point is that I adhere entirely to the position I have always taken upon this subject. I believe—and from what I have learnt in the last year I may say I know—that outlay, and possibly considerable outlay, is imperatively necessary for the safety of the country. That I admit; and I believe that the demands which the Government may make to insure the safety of the country will be cheerfully responded to by the House of Commons, provided that those demands are accompanied by a scheme of thorough, searching, and organic reform in the system which administers these sums. What the House of Commons will insist upon, and what it has an absolute right to insist upon, and what it ought to insist upon, is that there shall be given by the Government the most solid and the most substantial guarantees that the millions which they vote for the defences of the country shall not follow the fate of former millions and be wasted and thrown away. That is the position which I take up, and of which I hope you will approve, with respect to the outlay of large additional sums of money upon the Army and Navy.

There are other questions which also seem to me to cry aloud for legislative attention. Some years, I think nearly twenty years, have elapsed since Lord Beaconsfield surprised and arrested



the attention not only of his party but of the entire country by declaring that the legislative motto of the Tory party ought to be *Sanitas sanitaŕum, omnia sanitas*. That saying of Lord Beaconsfield, like many of his sayings, bears the closest examination, and will apply for a long time. There are, it seems to me, three great social questions which urgently demand legislative attention ; they demand legislative attention urgently on sanitary considerations, and they can, I believe, only safely be dealt with for sanitary objects and on sanitary principles. I allude, in the first place, to the great drink question. How can we manage by legislation to divert to the maintenance of other industries, and to the stimulus of other industries, a large portion of the 120,000,000*l.* which this country year after year throws away in drink. That is a great question. It cannot be denied that the indiscriminate multiplication of establishments for the sale of liquor—in which, I regret to say, the deceased Metropolitan Board was a grievous sinner—and the abominably excessive number in all our large towns of establishments for the sale of liquor, are rapidly ruining both the health and the morals of a large portion of our urban population, and that abominably excessive number is the direct parent of more than one-half the crime of this country, and of two-thirds of the poverty, the misery, the disease, and the vice which tarnishes and disgraces our English civilisation. What is the state of things which we have ? We have the public-houses, or the establishments for the sale of liquor, not only filling our prisons but filling to overflowing all our hospitals. We have these establishments for the sale of liquor doing a roaring trade, reaping golden harvests ; and we have our hospitals, many of them seriously hampered, some of them absolutely insolvent, for want of pecuniary support. I appeal to anybody, irrespective of party, if that is not a true statement of the case, and a statement of the case which ought to arouse the earnest attention of the Legislature ? There was a most eloquent bishop—a bishop who, I am happy to say, lives now, and for whom I have the most sincere admiration—who said that he would rather see England free than England sober. That was a fine general expression, calculated to arouse applause in certain audiences ;

but I can take anybody who believes in that sentiment—and I think I could take the revered prelate himself—into parts of London after dark, and he would agree with me, rather than talk about freedom, that a strong despotic administration with regard to the number of liquor-shops would be attended with the most unmixed and unadulterated good. I point to this subject in order to show that Lord Beaconsfield's maxim, 'Health and the laws of health' should be the great object of the Government and of the people. Lord Beaconsfield's maxim calls attention to this question, and, I think, decides the proper method of dealing with it.

I come to another most urgent question. It is the overcrowded state of large portions of our great towns. It is a source of pride to me to think that the Conservative party were the first to initiate legislation on this subject. Both under the Government of Lord Beaconsfield and again in 1885, under the Government of Lord Salisbury, measures were passed which aimed at dealing with the evil in this direction; but it cannot be denied these measures had not been adequate for this purpose. Recent very appalling atrocities have sharply drawn the attention of the metropolis to the East of London; and we must remember that terrible condition is by no means peculiar to the metropolis. We shall find it repeated in all its wretched phases in many of our large towns in this country; and it cannot possibly be denied that we have a prolific parent of vice, misery, and crime in the condition of the dwellings of a great portion of our labouring population. Closely allied with that subject is a question which excites much attention in London—the immigration of foreign paupers: how to check the undue flow into this country of people who have no means to subsist upon, no means by which they can maintain themselves, and who clearly add by their influx to the evils arising from the overcrowded state of our towns. Again I say that the laws of health imperatively call upon the Legislature to deal with the question, and it is only by asserting the laws of health and by aiming at objects of health that we can safely deal with the question. I call attention to one other object, in conclusion—a subject of immense importance—the question of cheap labour, better known

as the sweating system. We have had a great deal of disclosure with regard to the sweating system; for not only has the Committee of the House of Lords, set in motion by Lord Dunraven, brought to light much curious information on the subject, but there has been a series of able articles in the 'Lancet' setting forth the state of things in other towns. The State cannot regulate the price of labour, but the State can insist that labour in the mass shall not be carried on under conditions which violate all the principles of cleanliness, all the principles of health, all the principles of decency, and all the principles of morality.

These are the subjects which, I most strongly advocate, should occupy the future time of this Parliament. In that direction, I believe, lies the road to political success. No doubt the path which I have indicated is a laborious and stony and precipitous ascent; but depend upon it, at the summit lies the reward and the prize; and if the people of England have it impressed upon their minds by daily and by yearly experience—personal experience—that the policy of the Unionist party has been of that nature—that these great Irish evils, these great administrative evils, and these great social evils which I have ventured to put before you have been sensibly diminished, and, indeed, possibly to some extent swept away—then, when we recur to their judgment, we shall find that we have established an invincible claim upon their gratitude and confidence, renewed and sustained; and although the forces of our opponents may be imposing; although their leader and their general may be the most formidable foe whom political struggles have yet produced; although Ireland, Scotland, and Wales may, in a fortuitous and unhappy combination, be for a time arrayed against us, the common sense of England will again, as it did two years ago, carry us triumphantly through the fight; the voice and the will of England will maintain the Union which the arm of England alone created; and posterity will commemorate, with affectionate pride, the patriotism and the statesmanship of the Unionists of to-day.

## EXPEDITION TO SUAKIM.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 2, 4, AND 17, 1888.

[It became known in November 1888 that Suakim was besieged by the Arabs, and that the Egyptian soldiers there were not sufficient to defend the place. The Government decided to send a force of Egyptian troops and one battalion of British troops to its relief. This being deemed insufficient by the military authorities, Lord Randolph Churchill asked the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Stanhope, on December 4, whether those authorities were consulted before the step was taken, and whether 'they approved the policy of sending so slender a reinforcement of British troops.' Mr. Stanhope admitted, in effect, that the military authorities at headquarters had not been consulted, but stated that the commanding officer in Egypt was 'confident of success with his present force.' It being very uncertain what was the strength of the Arabs at that time, and many disquieting reports being afloat as to the alleged capture of Emin Bey and Mr. Stanley, Lord Randolph Churchill, on December 4, moved the adjournment of the House to gain an opportunity of discussing the whole question. On the 17th the question was again debated. It may be added that further reinforcements were despatched, in accordance with the spirit of Lord Randolph's resolution, and the Egyptian papers subsequently published proved that the commanders on the spot held such additional strength to be necessary, in spite of their first opinions. These papers are quoted in the general Introduction to the present volumes. The first speech was delivered on December 2, on the vote for embassies and foreign missions, a general debate having been raised by Mr. John Morley. I have here brought together the material points of all three speeches.]

**I**N the last Parliament but one I was associated with my right hon. friends in assaulting vigorously month by month, and sometimes week by week, the blundering policy which was then pursued by the Government of which the right hon. gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) was a member.

We held at that time that nothing could be more fatal than to proceed to Egypt without making up our minds as to what should be the definite policy of the country. The whole sum and substance of the accusations brought against the Government, accusations which were largely supported in the House and the country, was that the Government had no policy whatever, and that they had not made up their minds what they would do with the Soudan, and that till they did make up their minds it was improper to grant them supplies. I have heard with great sympathy the motion made by the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Morley) in the form of a protest against the sending of English troops to Suakim. It is most instructive to read the speeches which were made one Saturday afternoon in 1884 or 1885, when the present Government were in opposition, by Sir S. Northcote, the present President of the Board of Trade, and others, taking up practically the argument which has been used on both sides this afternoon. On that occasion a motion of refusal to grant supplies was made by the hon. member for Northampton, much on the ground on which the right hon. member for Newcastle has now made a similar motion, and the hon. member had the pleasure and pride of leading into the lobby the whole of the Tory party and coming within fifteen votes, if I recollect aright, of defeating the Government of the day. It has been stated that the cost of the expedition will naturally fall upon Egypt. Why? I am entirely at a loss to know. Egypt, as it exists at present, has no interest at Suakim. That is an assertion which at any rate would have commanded the support in bygone days of right hon. gentlemen now sitting on the Treasury bench. If it be said that the United Kingdom has a great interest in Suakim, I can understand the proposition. It is one capable of a good deal of argument. Great Britain has a great interest in holding Suakim; but why, then, should the cost fall upon Egypt? Egypt is a country whose finances are embarrassed, and it has been extricated from insolvency with great difficulty. If this additional pressure is put upon the country, sooner or later the time will come when Egypt will not be able to bear the burden and when she will come down on the British Treasury to make good deficiencies which she was

unable to provide. In my opinion, the policy of increasing the military charges which Egypt proper has to bear is a very dangerous policy. It may bring about a state of things in Egypt amounting almost to insolvency, and it may bring about what we have been most anxious to avoid—international interference on behalf of the creditors of Egypt, the result of which has always been further exactions from the Egyptian people. I protest against that doctrine, which appears to be the doctrine of the Government, that the cost of holding Suakim is to fall on the Egyptian revenue. At any rate, if that is the proposition of the Government, it must be supported, as it has not been hitherto, by convincing arguments that Egypt has a direct interest in holding Suakim against the Soudanese Arabs, and that unless held against the Soudanese Arabs the whole safety of the country would be imperilled. The Government propose to send a small detachment of some 500 men, without artillery and without cavalry, to reinforce 3,000 or 4,000 native troops, which seems like adding a drop to the ocean; and is very inadequate for the purpose—namely, stiffening the fighting qualities of the native troops. It seems to be forgotten that this is not the first time Suakim has been besieged. The besiegers have formerly no doubt been dislodged after great effort; but the moment they desired, that moment they returned. This has happened not once, but three times; and now the besiegers are back again, just as if they had never been beaten. Yet it appears we are going again to withdraw the moment the Arabs have been dislodged, in spite of the fact that, according to all experience, the besiegers are perfectly ready to return the moment our troops go away. I earnestly appeal to the Government, with their previous knowledge of this question, to tell the Committee plainly what is really to be the nature of the operations upon which British troops are going to enter; and what ground they have for thinking that Suakim will be a bit more free from attack after the troops depart than at the present moment. I should not have thought it necessary to speak upon the subject this afternoon if I had not so clearly before my mind the whole of the incidents of former expeditions. I wonder whether the Government have them equally clearly in their minds. The determination to send a

British force to Suakim—a small British force—seems to me as but the beginning of the letting out of water. In these matters I think that *principiis obsta* is a very good principle for the House to adopt. We have been pursuing, and hoping, that we might continue to pursue, a policy of the gradual withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt. I do not know whether the policy of gradual withdrawal is one which commends itself to every one on the Ministerial side of the House. With that I have nothing to do. But I say that the Government are committed to the policy of the withdrawal of their troops from Egypt. Yet for my part I would fifty times sooner send British troops to Cairo than to Suakim. We know the duties they would have to perform at Cairo, and that there is a probability that the troops might get away again at a certain time. But once we begin operations in the Soudan, there is no limit which we can possibly foresee to our duties. I do not know how those sitting on this side of the House will explain to their constituents why they have been drawn into a repetition of the policy which did a great deal of harm to the party opposite. I am very much afraid of any repetition, or of any commencement of a repetition, of operations by British troops in the Soudan. We are accustomed to hear the homely proverb that a burnt child dreads the fire. But the present Government is not the burnt child. The burnt child is there (pointing to the Opposition benches), and I am certain that nothing, not even the near prospect or probability of repealing the Union, would induce hon. gentlemen opposite to commence sending another expedition to the Soudan. I cannot see what real success is to attend our efforts. I am certain that the cost will ultimately fall on the British Treasury. I think that the House, even if they do not succeed in inducing the Government to reconsider their decision, are right in discussing this grave question. I do not think that this ought to be regarded as a party matter; and, quite apart from party feelings, with the information at my disposal, I am glad that a protest has been raised on this occasion, and I strongly join in that protest against the despatch of another expedition of this character after the bitter and mortifying experience we have had of previous enterprises of the same kind.

[The next speech was delivered December 4, on the motion to adjourn the House, this motion being raised on the reply given by Mr. Stanhope to a question that day on the paper.]

The House may well imagine that nothing but the very gravest imaginable reasons would have induced me to take so serious a step as moving the adjournment of the House and interrupting business. But I have come to the conclusion that there are reasons which must be weighed against the loss of a night, and those reasons raise the issue of human life—they raise the issue of the lives of British soldiers; and if by the action of the House to-night the danger to the lives of British soldiers be averted, I think that the loss of a night for the despatch of business may turn out for the advantage and interest of the country. It is to be regretted, indeed, that the House of Commons in matters of this kind is usually prevented from taking what I may call anticipatory action. As a general rule the Executive Government present the House of Commons with a *fait accompli*, and the House has no other function to perform than to act as a court of review in pronouncing whether the action taken by the Executive is right or wrong. Its powers are seriously hampered by the fact that such action has been taken and cannot be undone. The House on this occasion is placed on a different footing. Formerly, it has often happened that action has been taken by the Executive Government, which action would not have been taken had the full circumstances been laid before the House of Commons, and had the House of Commons had full opportunity of considering the circumstances. I adduce in support of that statement the remarkable instance of the bombardment of Alexandria. In all probability, if the facts connected with the bombardment of Alexandria had been laid before the House of Commons, that bombardment would never have taken place, and the innumerable evils which have followed would have been prevented. Now, what is the end of the action which the Government propose to take, and which I ask the House of Commons to use its great power to modify? The nature of the action is this—that it has been found necessary to raise the siege of Suakim, that a British battalion has been sent to Suakim, and that the force intended for that



purpose is now composed of 4,000 Egyptian troops and one battalion of British infantry. I will not discuss to-night, and I hope the House of Commons will not discuss, the general question of the Soudan, or any other general question, or the advantages or disadvantages of our retaining our hold on the Soudan; or whether the advantages or disadvantages are mainly Egyptian or British; or whether our operations on the Red Sea are for good or not for good; nor will I discuss alternative policies. I submit, without fear of contradiction, confident of the approval of the highest Parliamentary authority, that it is not the business of the House of Commons, when it differs from the Government of the day, to suggest alternative action. I protest against such an assertion as utterly destructive of the independence of the House of Commons. Circumstances arise with which the Government of the day propose to deal by certain specific methods, and all the House of Commons has to do is to pronounce whether those plans are good or bad plans, defensible or the reverse. The plan adopted by the Government of sending an expedition to Suakim composed of 4,000 Egyptian troops and one battalion of British infantry, is a plan which is not safe, is not sensible, and which in no sense of the word can, in the light of the experience of the past, be considered by the House of Commons as a good plan. The ground upon which I venture to press this motion upon the House is that the British contingent is wholly inadequate to the work which it is expected to perform. Sir, we have no business in employing British soldiers in any part of the world, but more especially in such parts as the Soudan, to run any unnecessary risks. Unnecessary risks are at all times to be deprecated; and that we are running an unnecessary risk there can be no doubt whatever in sending this small battalion of British infantry overwhelmed among a mass of 4,000 utterly unreliable Egyptian troops.

I should like to remind the House of the difficulties and disasters which have arisen from the employment of inadequate forces—of British forces too small for the work they had to do—in meeting savage and warlike enemies. The Zulu war was a case in point. That war was commenced with inadequate British forces; defeat and disaster followed, and an immense

expenditure and immense efforts were required to make up for the primary and cardinal error of sending out inadequate forces. Nothing contributed so much to the fall of the Government of that day as the conduct of the Zulu war. The Boer war of 1881 was another instance of attempting to do work admitted to be difficult with inadequate British forces. Again immense expenditure and grave loss of life followed that cardinal error. Those two instances alone would give point and force to the contention, that one battalion of British infantry with a mass of Egyptian troops is an inadequate force for the task set before it.

Not only do those and other examples which I might quote point to the danger of attempting considerable operations with inadequate forces, but if we should want an illustration against the employment of inadequate forces, we find it in past events at Suakim itself. No doubt the Government of that day were singularly unfortunate in their treatment of the Soudan, and it is a matter now hardly denied that many blunders must be laid to their charge. One blunder, however, they did not make; they did not attempt to encounter the Soudanese warriors with inadequate forces. The first expedition of General Graham was essentially a strong force. Yet we know that very heavy fighting attended that expedition. The second expedition to Suakim, also, I think, under the command of General Graham, was nearly double in size, and accompanied by Indian troops; and, moreover, the House must bear this in mind, because it brings out the fighting qualities of those Arab troops: that expedition was at one time in danger of total overthrow, and but for the desperate gallantry of an Indian regiment, inevitable and overwhelming disaster must have occurred. That incident is of great importance in considering the sort of expedition we have to contemplate, and it has a force which the House of Commons will admit as an argument against sending any further expedition without a strong and adequate force of British troops. Why do I urge these points upon the House? Because I hold that in sending one battalion of British infantry to Suakim you are flying in the face of all our experience. But I would not dare to interrupt the business of the House on that plea alone; I

would not venture to set up my opinion against that of the Executive Government, if it were not for this very very grave fact—I state it as a positive fact, and I implore the House to give that fact the weight which I think it deserves—that in deciding to send one British battalion to Suakim, her Majesty's Government have acted against the advice of responsible and high military authorities here. That would appear to be perfectly clear from the cautious answer which the Secretary for War gave to my question this afternoon. But if it did not appear from that, I state it as a positive fact, and I defy contradiction, that high military authorities at home have disapproved of this sending of one battalion of British infantry to Suakim. Can anything better illustrate the curiosity of our military organisation, that a military expedition can take place against the advice and be composed in a manner disapproved of by high military authority in command of the Army? That, however, is undoubtedly the fact. And, Sir, this is also the case, which the House of Commons will also bear in mind, that if by any chance these operations are not attended with success, no responsibility whatever can fall upon the high military authorities at home. . . .

I do not hesitate to say that I hate the Soudan. The idea to me of risking the life of a single British soldier in that part of the world is inexpressibly repugnant. I do not believe that any gain can accrue to this country, no matter how great may be the military success, and I am certain that great loss and danger may come if this military expedition is not successful. The risk which we run is not only unnecessary, but, in the event of success, the result is altogether incommensurate with the risk.

[On the 17th, Lord Randolph Churchill's remarks were mainly directed to the general policy, or want of policy, pursued by England in relation to Egypt.]

There is hardly any political question on which I have stronger opinions than the question of the expediency of engaging in British military enterprise in the Soudan, and when I recall the language in which I attacked the Government of the right hon. gentleman opposite for engaging British military forces in the Soudan, I cannot refrain from expressing regret

and alarm at what appears to be a recommencement of a course which I then so strongly denounced, and still at the present moment denounce. If there is one thing more than another that misled the Government of the right hon. gentleman and misled the House of Commons and the country in 1882, and in subsequent years, it was that neither the Government nor the House nor the public got really true information as to what was going on. They received information from persons who were interested in pursuing a certain line of policy, and all that was likely to divert the House of Commons from that policy was sedulously kept back. I think we are in the same danger at the present moment.

If Suakim is of Egyptian concern and Egyptian interest, and must be held for Egyptian security, undoubtedly the Government is right in advising the Egyptian Government to transfer troops for the defence of that place, and undoubtedly the expense of that defence must fall on Egypt; but if the place is not of Egyptian importance and Egyptian interest, and if it is not for Egyptian security that it should be retained, and if British troops are moved there because it is a British interest and for British security, and for British objects, the expense ought certainly to fall upon the British Exchequer. I ask the House, if the Government had announced to the House, as they probably will some day, that Egypt will not bear the expense of this expedition, and that it will fall upon the British taxpayer, what do they think would have been the effect of that statement upon the debate of the 4th instant, and how much do they think the position would have been strengthened of those who object to the expedition altogether? If England has to pay, and constitutional precedent had been followed, a vote would have been taken before the expedition was sent out, and what would have been the chances of such a vote being agreed to by Parliament? I pass on to notice a remark of an hon. member who said, 'We must show the Arabs that we are their masters;' but he forgets that we have been for four years trying to bring this truth home to the Arabs, and though we have in all conscience killed enough of them, it seems we have not yet persuaded the dervishes that the British are their masters. It seems to me that that is an

argument which does not stand the test of experience. One word about negotiations. Negotiations are ridiculed by the Under-Secretary of State, but I think he is scarcely well informed. He confounds the dervishes with the coast tribes, but he omitted to tell the House—perhaps he does not know—that the dervishes are absolutely dependent on the coast tribes for subsistence, and that if the latter were to cease supplying them with food the dervishes would have to retire in the course of a very short time indeed. The object of negotiating with the coast tribes was in the hope of inducing them by material rewards and material interests to desist from giving those supplies, so that the dervishes would have to retire. If negotiations are to be condemned, at any rate let them be condemned on their merits, and not be dismissed in an inaccurate manner by saying it is impossible to enter into negotiations in the presence of hostile tribes. The Government have told us to-night they know clearly what their object is. They have told us they know their own mind. I am delighted to hear it. It is an unusual thing in the history of this country for a British Government to know its own mind, and I am glad that this Government is placed in such a fortunate position; but I am rather sorry they have not placed the House of Commons in an equally fortunate position by telling us what their mind is. I defy even the hon. member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean) to say what the policy of the Government is with regard to the Soudan, or what the result of a battle would be, whether successful or the reverse. Nobody knows what is to follow. The object of the Government seems to be perfectly narrow and limited. It is to send a force to Suakim, fight a battle, and then go away (A Voice: 'No.') Did I hear somebody say 'No'? I will engage to say that the Government will not extend their obligations by one inch, because if they did they would considerably extend the scope of this debate. The object is to raise the siege of Suakim, fight a battle, and drive away the dervishes—to what distance we are not told, but at any rate they are not to be pursued into the Soudan. Have I (turning to Ministers) accurately stated the policy of the Government? Is that a fair question to ask? I must express my opinion again that that is

a silly and a stupid policy, an utterly unprofitable policy, one that will not assist the pacification of the Soudan nor the development of its commerce. It is a policy that will do no possible good, unless you consider the decimation of the dervishes a possible good. The Government say they are going to Suakim to fight a battle, to kill a number of Arabs, and then to go away, and for that we are to impose on the Egyptian Treasury, and ultimately, as I contend, on the British Treasury, a very considerable charge. Against that thriftless and profitless policy I gladly avail myself of this further opportunity of recording a final protest.

THE END.



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